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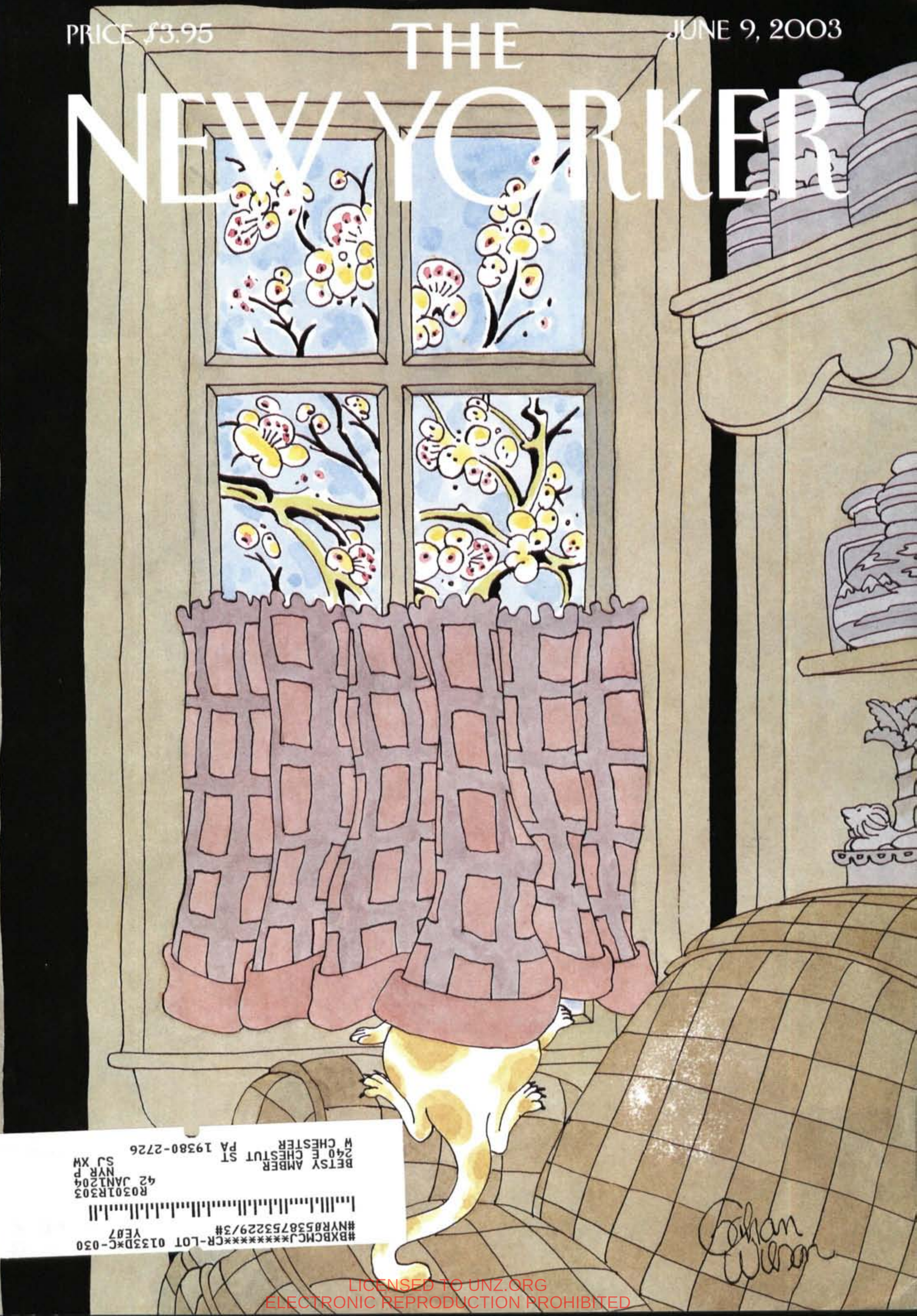

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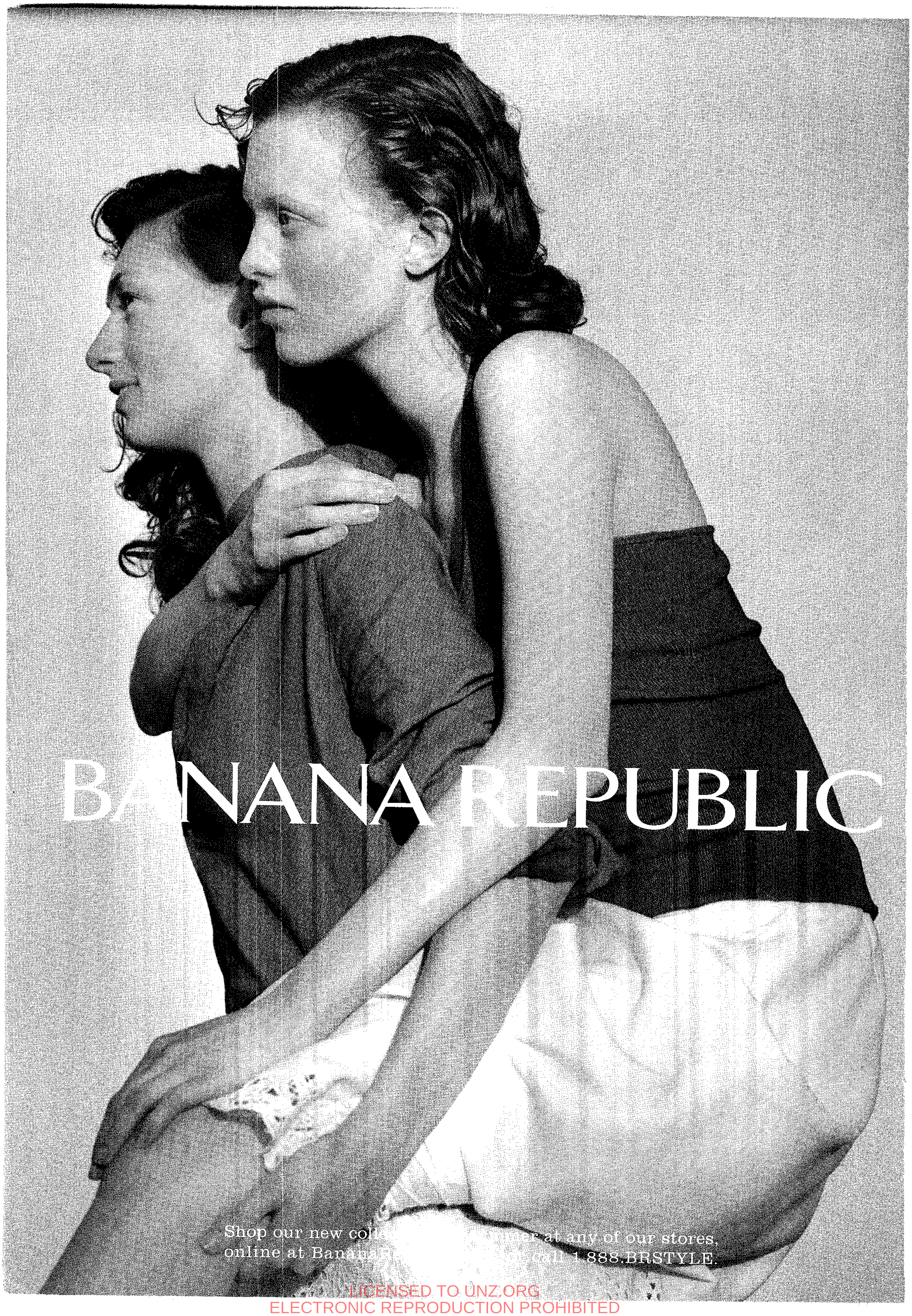
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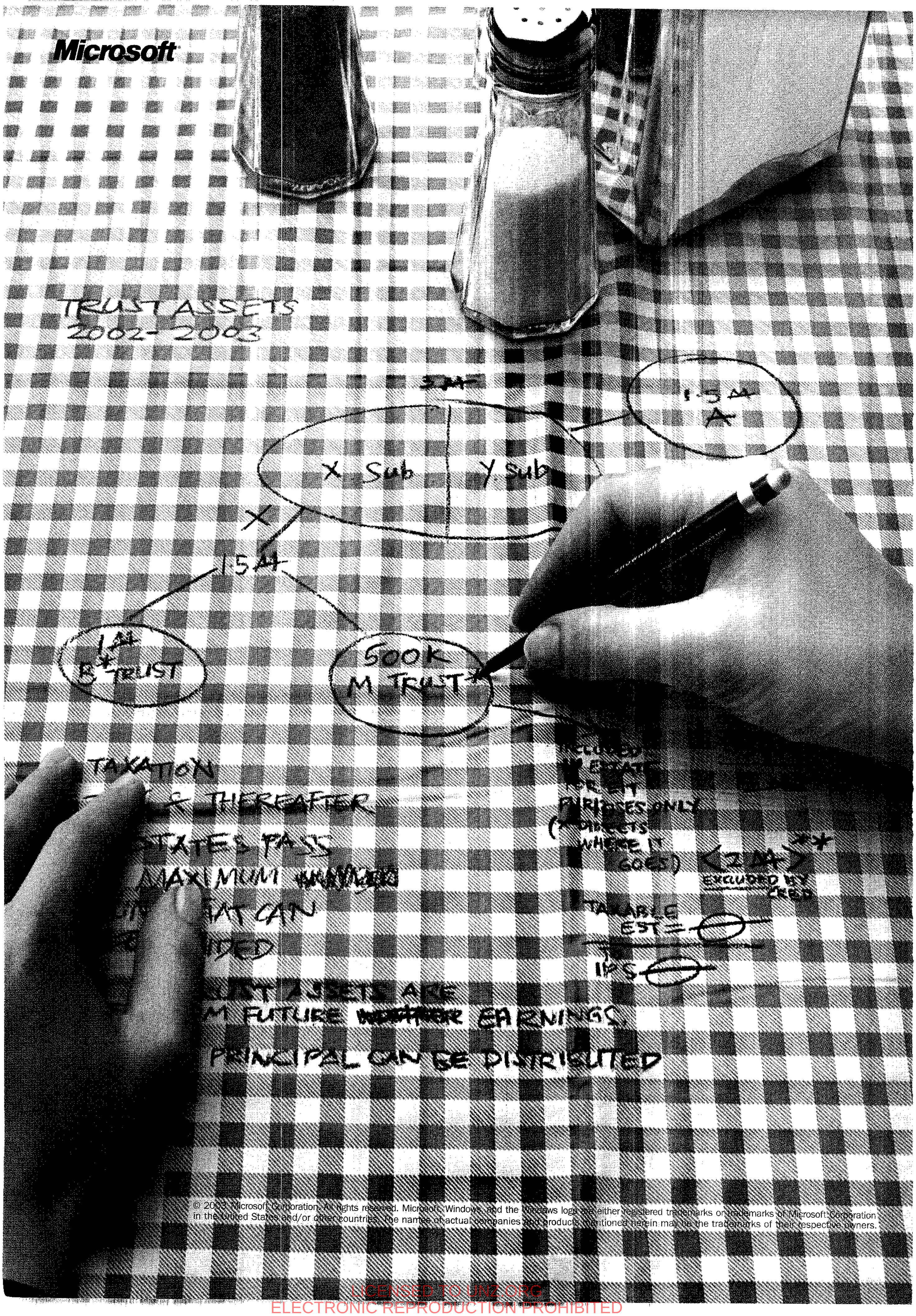
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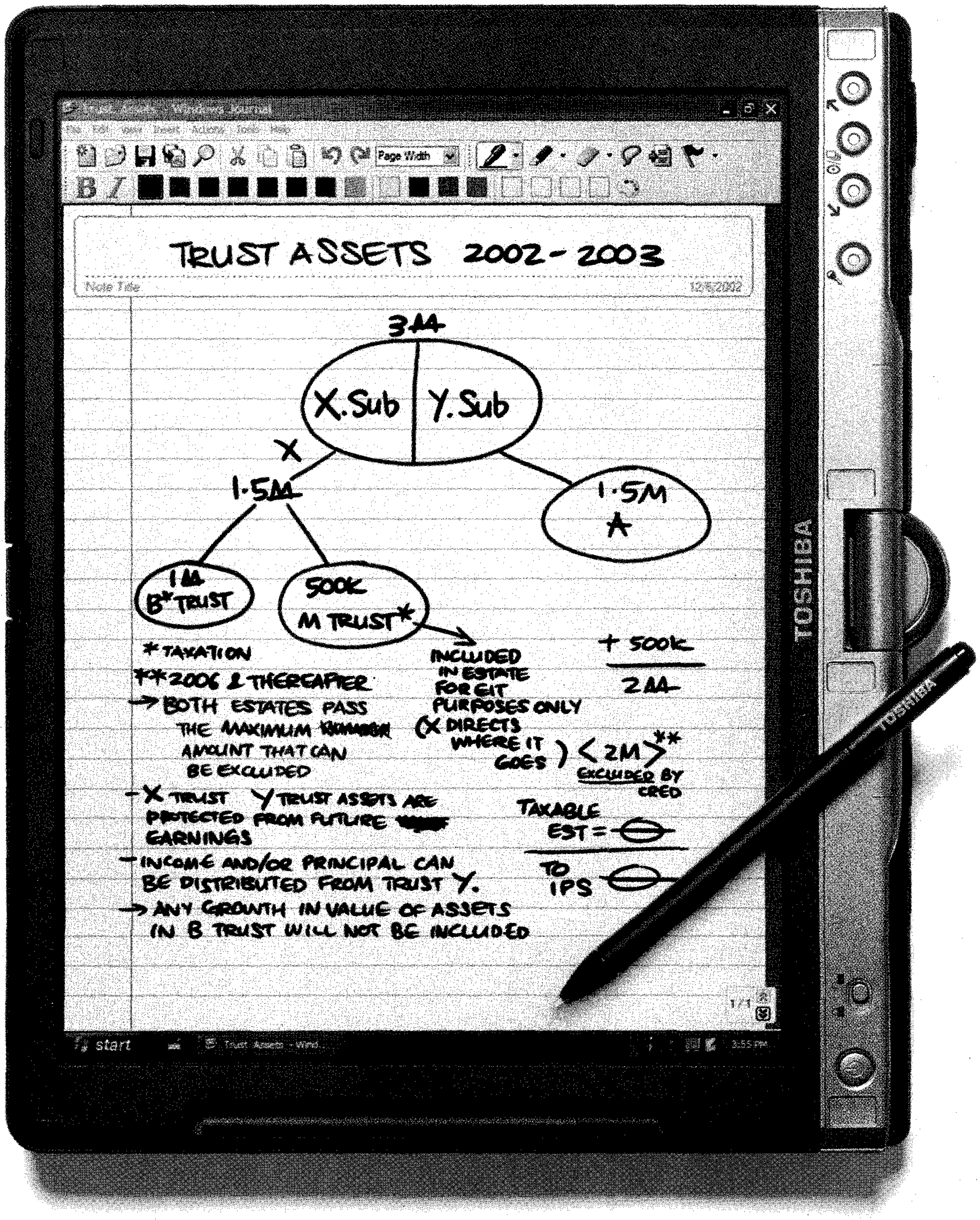

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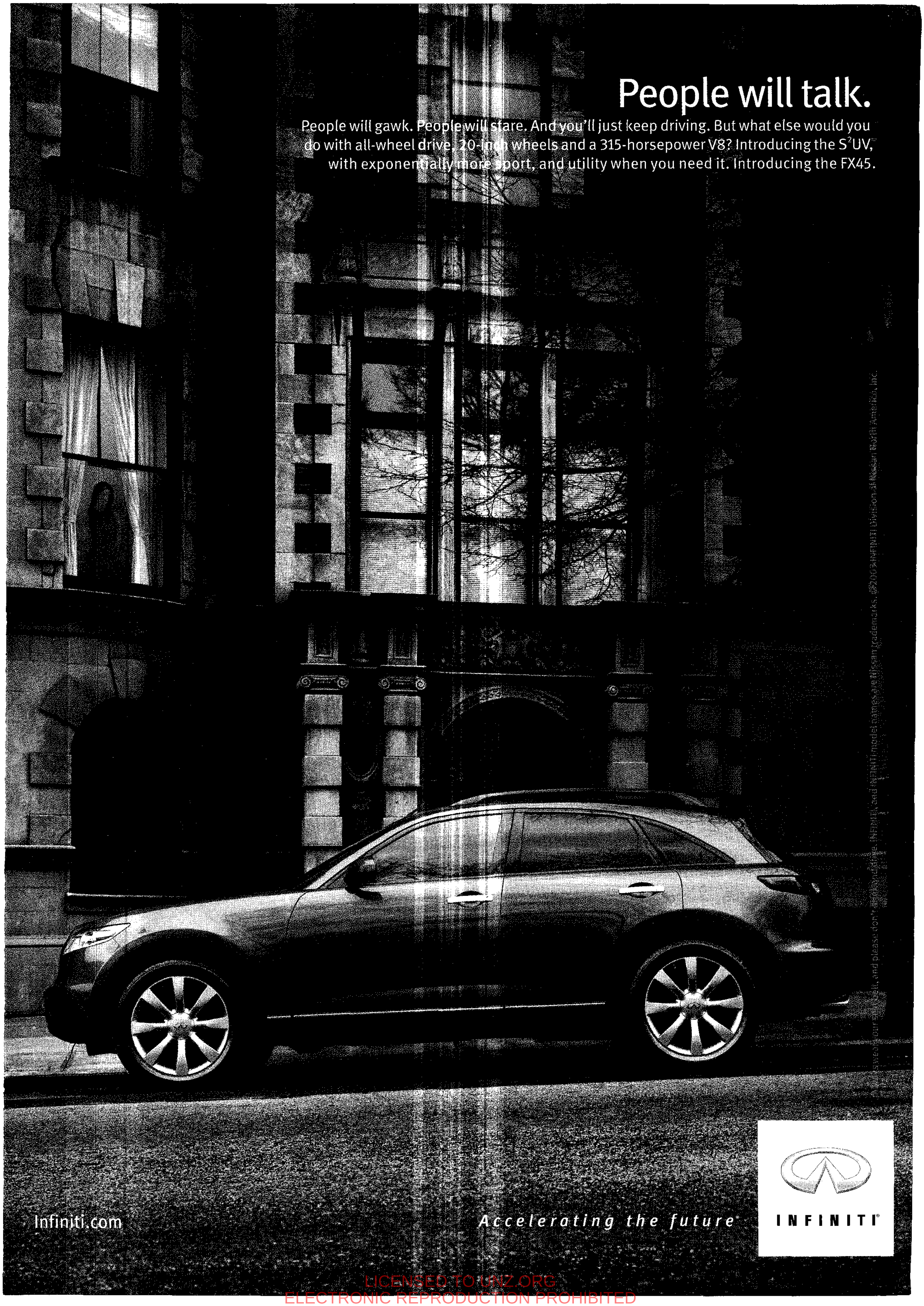

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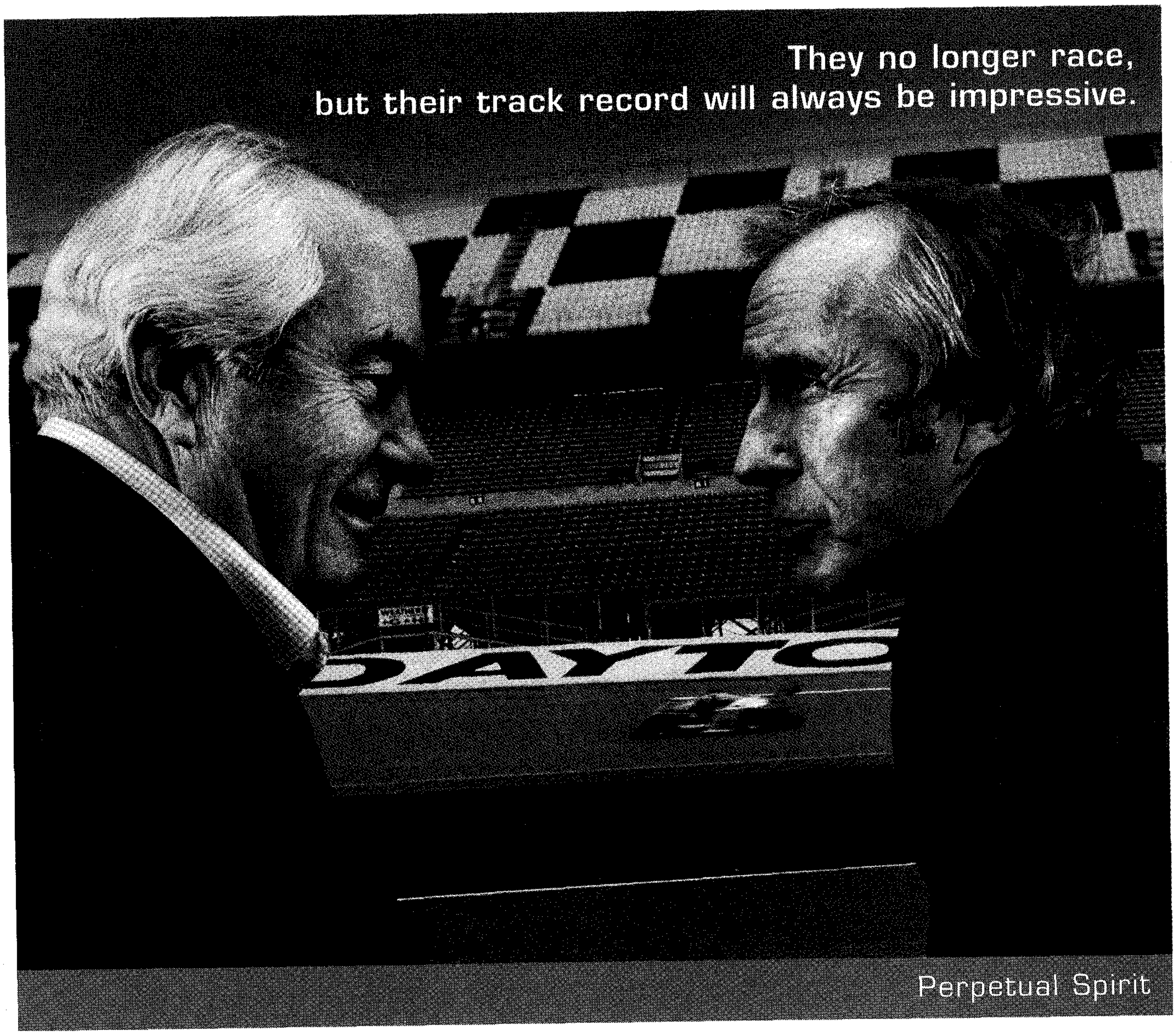
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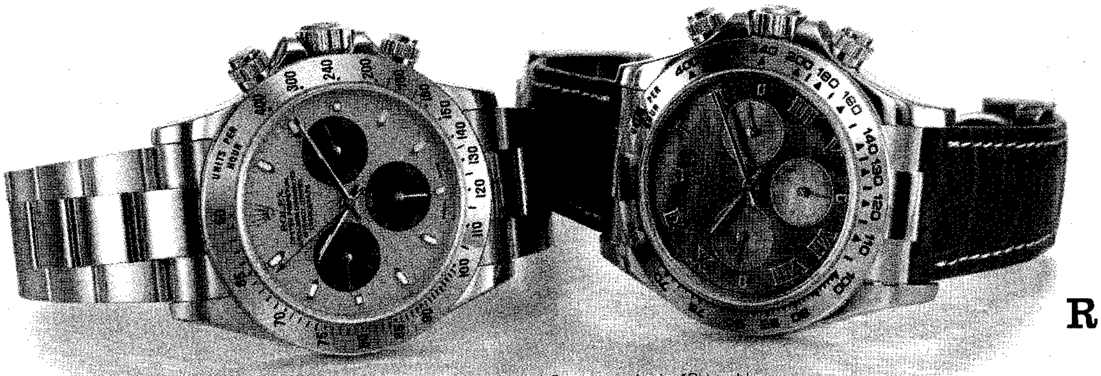

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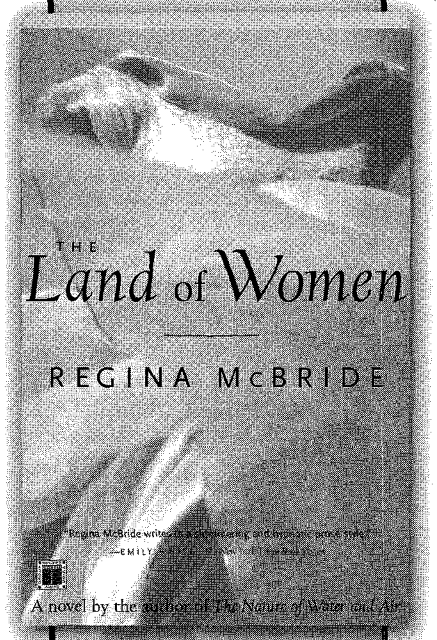

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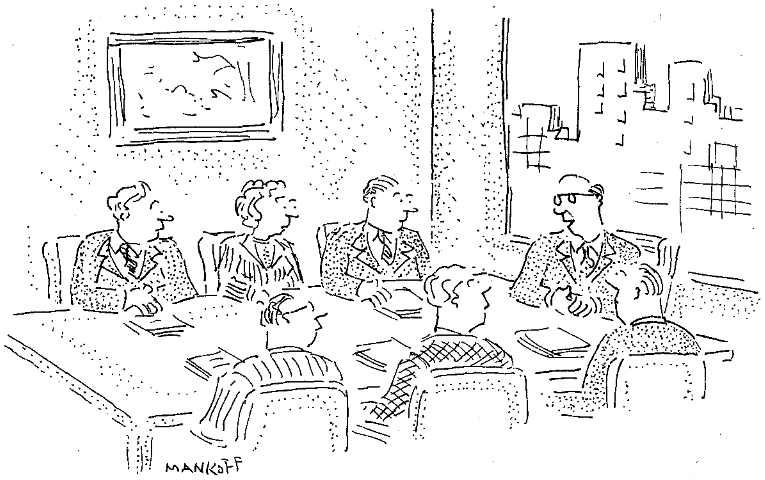

“Now, if you would all do me the favor of arranging yourselves into a human pyramid, I will reënact my ascent of Everest.”

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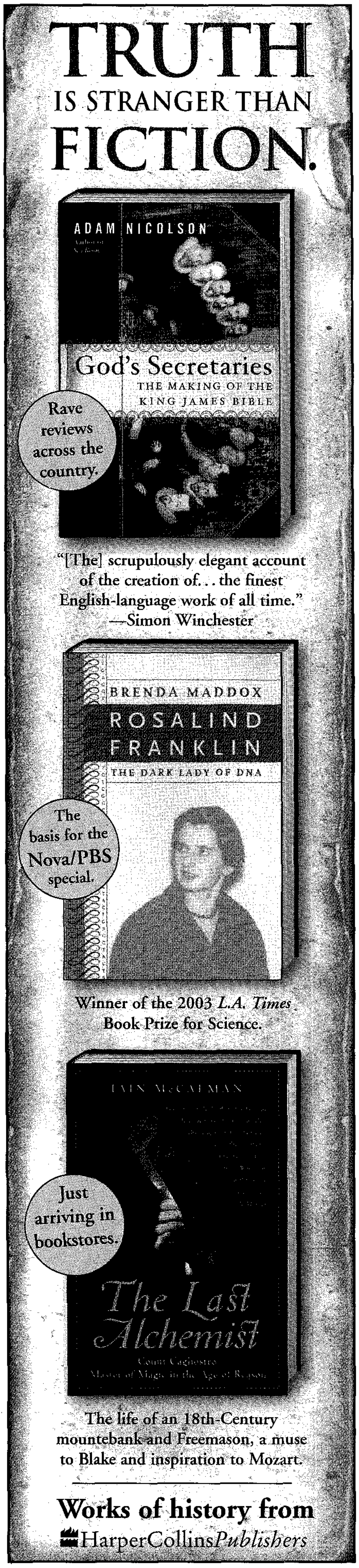
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AN AFRICAN TRAGEDY

Samantha Power shows that the tragedy of AIDS deaths in South Africa concerns more than the predictable and unconscionable greed of global pharmaceutical companies like Glaxo ("The AIDS Rebel," May 19th). But it also concerns more than President Thabo Mbeki's relation to a few, largely discredited U.S. AIDS heretics who question the disease's link with H.I.V. The other part of the tragedy is that Mbeki and his health ministers, in their commitment to finding an "African" solution and not being beholden to the West, have fallen into the hands of a larger contingent—academic élites, postmoderns, and post-colonials among them—who have for decades reduced the AIDS epidemic to a crisis of prejudice and negative stereotypes. True, AIDS has been plagued from the start by its diabolical "doubles"—savage images of African genesis, apes, and (sexual) anarchy. But death itself is far worse. Mbeki's stubbornness and fierce pride, and his paranoia about the toxicity of retroviral drugs, have consigned thousands of poor and underinsured black South Africans to pointless suffering and unnecessary death, in the name of an African renaissance.

Nancy Scheper-Hughes
Professor of Medical Anthropology
University of California
Berkeley, Calif.

Critics of President Mbeki, many of whom are quoted in Power's article, have perpetuated the misconception that he thinks antiretroviral therapy is voodoo medicine. Not so. In agreement with virtually all mainstream practitioners, his government believes that antiretrovirals can, under the right conditions, suspend the death sentence imposed by infection with H.I.V. The groundwork is being laid for making antiretroviral therapy available to those who cannot afford it. But—as mainstream practitioners also agree—this is no easy undertaking. The government is working to bring down the cost of the drugs, but even at discounted prices they remain prohibitively expensive by developing-world standards. Their safe and effective use requires infrastructure and specially trained personnel, both of which are now lacking. It also requires that patients take their pills strictly as directed, to avoid becoming incubators of drug-resistant strains of the virus. Yes, the government has been cautious about embracing the public provision of antiretroviral therapy. Critics are wrong, however, to connect this to the supposed influence of dissident scientists. Instead, the caution stems from a responsible assessment of priorities in the face of massive need and finite resources, and from a deeply held conviction that what is introduced now should be sustainable.

Simon Barber
U.S. Representative, International Marketing Council of South Africa
Keedysville, Md.

When President Mbeki put forward the theory that poverty was one of the root causes of the AIDS epidemic in South Africa, he was, as Power notes, thoroughly trashed by his white political opponents and the media. Yet the relationship between poverty and the AIDS pandemic in Africa is becoming widely accepted. For instance, it is now enshrined in World Health Organization guidelines that malnutrition significantly increases an individual's vulnerability to H.I.V. and that part of a holistic solution to the AIDS pandemic is to improve nutrition. And the U.S. Congress recently passed legislation on the H.I.V./AIDS crisis in Africa and the Caribbean which adopted improving nutrition as part of the American prevention-and-treatment strategy. One of the realities of being an elected official is that you'll get better media coverage for being fashionably wrong than you will ever get for being prematurely right.

Philip L. Christenson
Washington, D.C.

•

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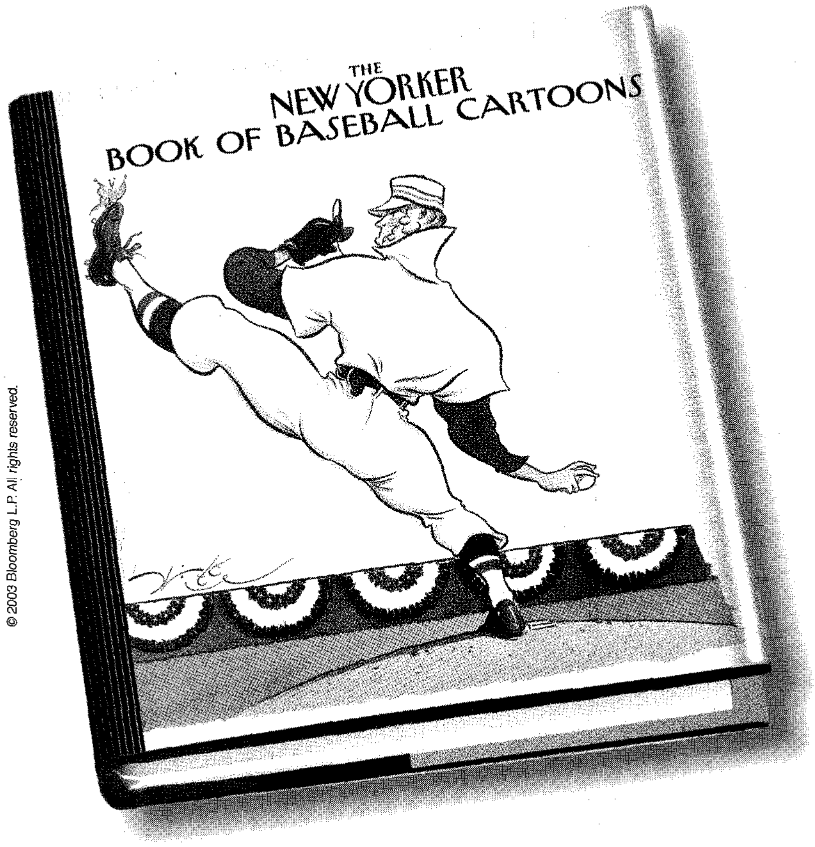
A home run for Father's Day!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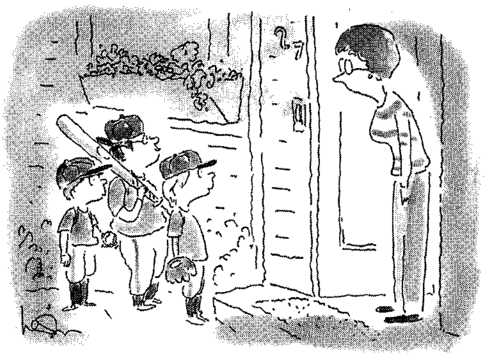

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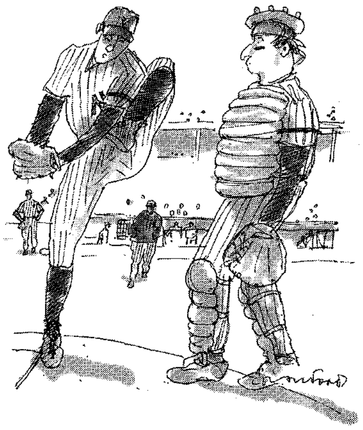

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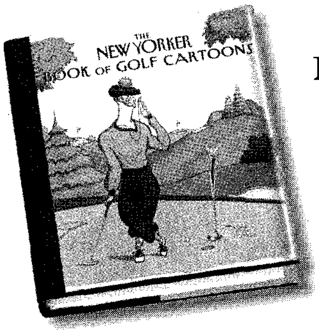
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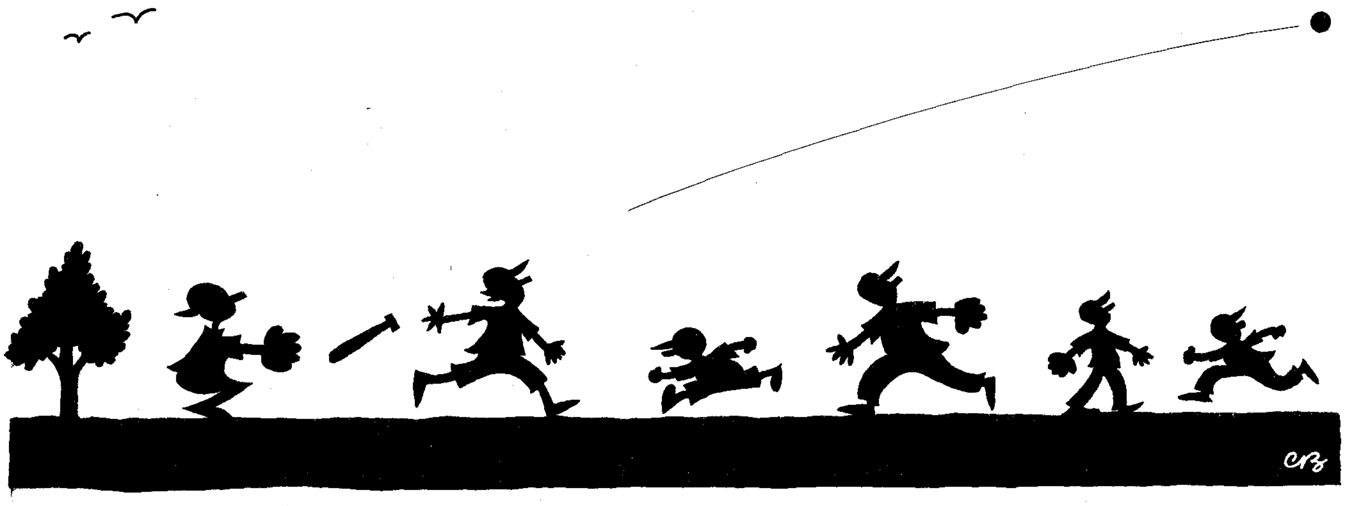

THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

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A BAD FRIEND
In a new play by Jules Feiffer, set during the McCarthy era, members of a Brooklyn family suffer for their Communist Party ties. Larry Bryggman, David Harbour, and Mark Feuerstein lead the cast. Directed by Jerry Zaks. In previews. Opens June 9 at 6:45. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200.)

EIGHT DAYS (BACKWARDS)
The Vineyard Theatre concludes its season with a new play by Jeremy Dobrish, directed by Mark Brokaw, about thirteen city dwellers who contrive to turn time's arrow in the opposite direction and recoup missed opportunities. With Bill Buell, Barbara Garrick, and Josh Radnor. In previews. (108 E. 15th St. 212-353-0303.)

A GLANCE AT NEW YORK
For the first time since the Civil War, Benjamin A. Baker's 1848 melodrama returns to the stage, in an Axis Company production. Baker's play was the first to feature Mose the Fireman, a tough but decent character who beats up some people and saves others and was so popular that he spawned a series of "Mosaic" plays. Directed by Randy Sharp. In previews. Opens June 7 at 8. (1 Sheridan Sq., at Seventh Ave. 212-807-9300.)

GRASMERE
Kristina Leach's play about William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and the two women who inspired them comes to Cherry Lane Studio for ten days only. Directed by Joseph Arnold. Previews begin June 6. Opens June 8 at 3. (38 Commerce St., between Bedford and Hudson Sts. 212-279-4200.)

HIP-HOP THEATRE FESTIVAL
Danny Hoch is the artistic director of the fourth annual downtown celebration of hip-hop, which this year includes more than twenty-five new works by actors, playwrights, dancers, and artists from across the Americas. Begins June 3. Through June 14. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St.; New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. Please call 212-477-5288 for schedule and venue information.)

THE NOTEBOOKS OF LEONARDO DA VINCI
Mary Zimmerman ("Metamorphoses") brings her 1993 play about the imagination of Da Vinci back to Second Stage, in a production that combines dance, theatre, music, and acrobatics. Previews begin June 3. (307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422.)

THE PERSIANS
Aeschylus' 470 B.C. play about the Persian Wars (he was a vet) has been revived by Tony Randall's National Actors Theatre in an adaptation by Ellen McLaughlin, which stars Len Cariou and Roberta Maxwell. Ethan McSweeny directs. In previews. Opens June 10 at 8. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 212-239-6200.)

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SAVANNAH BAY
Kathleen Chalfant and Marin Ireland star in a Classic Stage production of Marguerite Duras's drama about the rapprochement between an aged *vedette* and her granddaughter. Directed by Les Waters, with a new translation by Barbara Bray. In previews. Opens June 10 at 8. (136 E. 13th St. 212-677-4210, ext. 13.)

TROJAN WOMEN: A LOVE STORY
Charles Mee's lyrical, modernized retelling of the plight of the women of Troy incorporates text from Euripides and Berlioz and is presented by Double Helix Theatre Company. Ellen Beckerman directs. In previews. Opens June 7 at 8. (Phil Bosakowski Theatre, 354 W. 45th St. 212-352-3101.)

OPENED RECENTLY

DOOR WIDE OPEN
"Your first thought is your best thought," Jack Kerouac said. But Joyce Johnson questions his advice. In a new play that chronicles her love affair with the Beat icon in the late fifties, she lets his correspondence reveal his childishness, infidelity, and self-destructiveness. John Ventimiglia, as Kerouac, and Adira Amram, as the young Johnson, read from their letters to each other and from Kerouac's buddies as an older Johnson (Amy Wright) narrates. Despite an occasionally dragging narrative, the play is energized by the tension between the young and the old Johnson, both of whom love their hero—one uncritically, one critically—and by sparks of attraction between the lovers. With a live, era-appropriate underscore by the onetime Kerouac collaborator David Amram. Directed by Tony Torn. (Bowery Poetry Club, 308 Bowery. 212-614-0505. Through June 8.)

GYPSY
Bernadette Peters's performance as Mama Rose is a marvel, a startling reinvention of the musical warhorse created by Arthur Laurents, Jule Styne, and Stephen Sondheim. Other Mamas—such as Rosalind Russell and Ethel Merman—spotlighted Rose's resentments, but Peters humanizes the character, making her vulnerable and occasionally decent. With Heather Tepe, who sings and dances with captivating hysteria, as the preteen "Dainty June," and Tammy Blanchard, who plays her grownup sister Louise—who becomes the stripper Gypsy Rose Lee—as a shy coquette. Directed by Sam Mendes. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/12/03.) (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

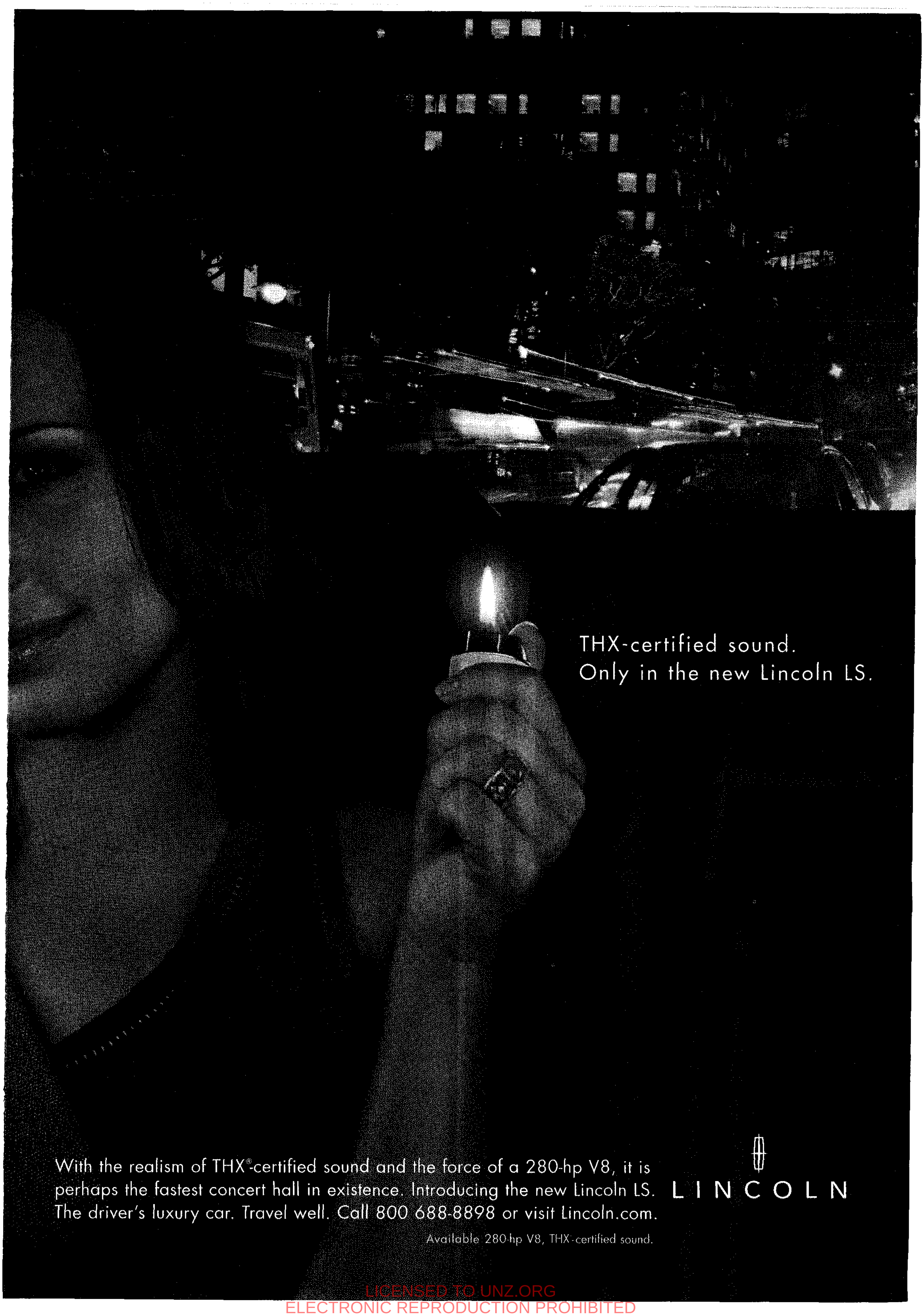
HABITAT
Judith Thompson's new play, directed by Julia Gibson, is a dark, leisurely told urban fairy tale about mother love, refracted through a plot about a group home for troubled teens that sets up shop in an upscale Toronto neighborhood. Though the plot veers into didactic cliché, the characters are fascinatingly individual, and whenever the drama threatens to become treacly one or another of the actors delivers a powerhouse monologue that moves things in a new direction. The same cast appears in a new production of Ibsen's "Little Eyolf," adapted and directed by Ron Russell, which runs in repertory with "Habitat." (Theatre 3, at 311 W. 43rd St. 212-206-1515.)

HUMBLE BOY
In Charlotte Jones's overprecious update of "Hamlet," Felix Humble (Jared Harris), a mopey, directionless thirty-five-year-old, returns to the Cotswolds upon his father's death by bee sting, where he learns that his father has been cuckolded by a neighbor, George Pye; that he himself has sired a child by the neighbor's daughter, Rosie (Ana Reeder); and that his mum, Flora (Blair Brown, in a Vivian Pickles turn), wants to remarry. Highlights of the show are Mary Beth Hurt's performance as Mrs. Humble's meek friend Mercy Lott, who serves up a tainted gazpacho to hilarious effect, and Tim Hatley's gorgeous garden set—luxuriant grasses dotted with poppies and roses, rising around an immense beehive. Directed by John Caird. (Manhattan Theatre Club, City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

I AM MY OWN WIFE
Jefferson Mays stars in a new play by Doug Wright ("Quills"), directed by Moisés Kaufman. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

LAST DANCE
In a new play by Marsha Norman, presented by Manhattan Theatre Club, an American poet living in the South of France is beset by hangers-on. JoBeth Williams and Lorenzo Pisoni lead the cast. Directed by Lynne Meadow. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT
Eugene O'Neill's masterpiece has been superbly revived at the Plymouth, bringing O'Neill's own spectral, heartbroken family—"the four haunted Tyrones," he called them—to the stage. Vanessa Redgrave and Brian Dennehy play Mary and James Tyrone, and Philip Seymour Hoffman and Robert Sean Leonard are their sons, Jamie and Edmund. Hoff-



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man's toxic sorrow, in his drunken confession of envy of his brother, kicks the play onto a completely new emotional level, and this and Mary's final aria pack an unforgettable wallop. Directed by Robert Falls. (5/19/03) (236 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

MASTER HAROLD . . . AND THE BOYS
Danny Glover returns to Broadway in a revival of Athol Fugard's 1982 play about a white South African boy's friendship with two black servants. Directed by Lonny Price (who played the boy back in 1982). With Michael Boatman and Christopher Denham. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

MOLLY'S DREAM
Written in 1968, Maria Irene Fornes's fluid, surreal play with music has more comedy to it than much of her other work. In a new production at SoHo Rep, Molly (Bo Corre), a love-starved saloon waitress, falls asleep at the counter and dreams of a dazzling man in a white suit (Dominic Bogart) who enters the bar flanked by five women in transparent rain gear. Directed by Daniel Aukin, with a witty new score by Maury Loeb and lyrics by Fornes. (46 Walker St. 212-868-4444. Closes June 7.)

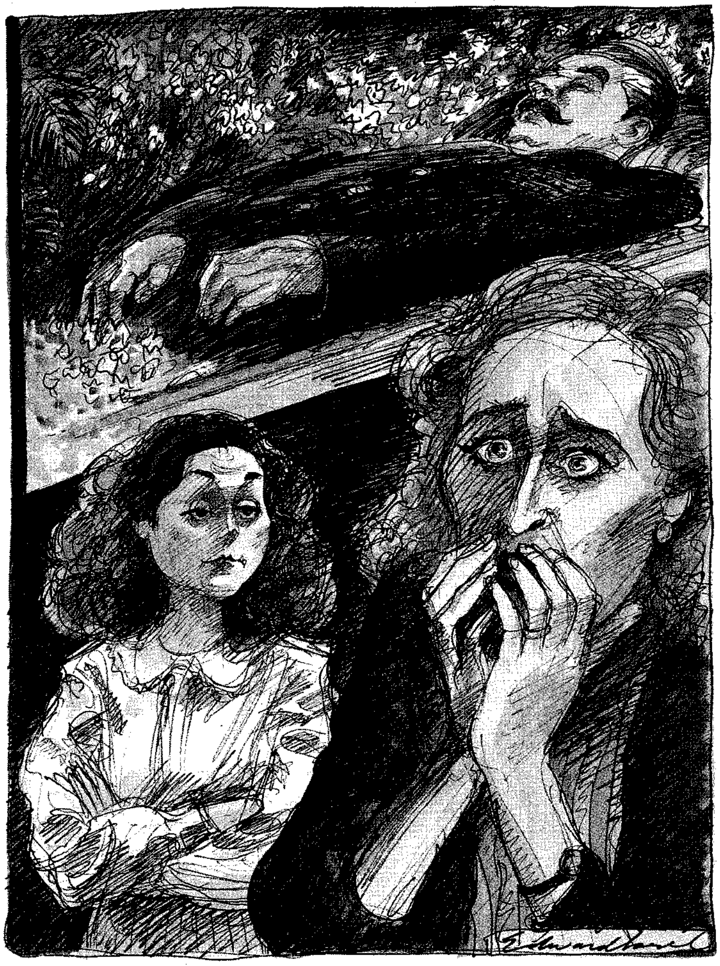
MONDO DRAMA
Douglas Carter Beane's new play, directed by Christopher Ashley, is less a narrative-driven comedy than a series of sketches based on the "mondo" documentary style of Mina Loy. The various scenes attempt to skewer bizarre subcultures (otherwise known as easy targets)—prostitutes in Amsterdam, pretentious artists, Upper East Side socialites, and !Kung women of the Kalahari—but serve merely as occasions for Beane to be an equal-opportunity offender while making broad gay jokes and insider references to the politics of New York theatre. Miriam Shor, Siobhan Mahoney, and, less successfully, the comedian Caroline Rhea, gamely play along with the antics, zipping from accent to accent and stereotype to stereotype, but it all seems rather juvenile. A presentation of the Drama Dept., of which Beane is the artistic director. (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. 212-239-6200.)

NINE
In this elegant revival of Arthur Kopit and Maury Yeston's 1982 musical—an adaptation of Fellini's "8½"—Antonio Banderas plays Guido Contini, a film director whose genius is inextricable from his childlike narcissism. Good-looking, confident, and amusing, Banderas doesn't have to strain to make the audience believe that he is catnip to women, and he also has a fine voice. The other characters are satellites around Planet Guido: his put-upon wife (Mary Stuart Masterson), his battle-axe producer (Chita Rivera), and his tenacious and lubricious mistress, Carla (Jane Krakowski), who descends semi-nude from the rafters. Directed by David Leveaux. (4/21 & 28/03) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200.)

PEG O' MY HEART
In the Irish Rep's lively production of J. Huntley Manners' 1912 comic melodrama, a well-born English family discovers one morning that it has lost its fortune, and that, thanks to a capricious provision in a will, its only hope of regaining solvency lies in taking in an untutored Irish niece. Predictable events ensue—the triumph of love, a marriage to a nobleman—but the cast handily brings off the proceedings, and the production's charm is enhanced by jaunty new songs, with such lines as "It's awfully nice to be privileged," written by Charlotte Moore, who also directed. (132 W. 22nd St. 212-727-2737.)

RAIN DANCE
The Signature's otherwise welcome Lanford Wilson season ends with a lacklustre finale. In 1945, three Los Alamos scientists and a Native American man sit around a table chewing the cud of memory on the eve of the first A-bomb tests. As a metaphor of the sacred and the profane, it's labored and lame, and, sad to say, the casting of James Van Der Beek, a veteran of TV's "Dawson's Creek," as a brilliant young scientist with a penchant for philosophical rumination beggars the imagination. Guy Sanville directs. (Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. 212-244-7529. Closes June 29.)

WRITER'S BLOCK
In "Riverside Drive," the better of two new one-acts by Woody Allen, a homeless man (Skipp Sudduth) accosts a self-absorbed screenwriter (Paul Reiser) as he fidgets on a bench by the Hudson, awaiting his mistress. When she arrives and attempts blackmail, the homeless man suggests murder. "She's a human being," the screenwriter protests. "You say that like it's a good thing," the bum responds. The second play, "Old Saybrook," a farce about infidelity, introduces a playwright ex machina. This may be Allen's idea of a coup de théâtre, but unfortunately it's more of a coup de grâce. (5/26/03) (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 212-239-6200.)



Kala Savage and Jan Maxwell in Jules Feiffer's "A Bad Friend."

EDWARD SOREL

LONG RUNS

AIDA
Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 212-307-4747.

BARBRA'S WEDDING
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 212-239-6200. (Closes June 18.)

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 212-307-4747.

BLUE MAN GROUP
Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 212-254-4370.

LA BOHÈME
Broadway, Broadway at 53rd St. 212-239-6200.

CABARET
Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 212-239-6200.

CHICAGO
Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200.

DE LA GUARDA
Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 212-239-6200.

DREAM A LITTLE DREAM
Village, 158 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100.

ENCHANTED APRIL
Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

THE EXONERATED
45 Bleecker Street Theatre, 45 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100.

42ND STREET
Ford Center, 213 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4100.

GOLDA'S BALCONY
Manhattan Ensemble Theatre, 55 Mercer St. 212-239-6200.

HAIRSPRAY
Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 212-307-4100.

HANK WILLIAMS: LOST HIGHWAY
Little Shubert, 422 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4100.

KIKI AND HERB: COUP DE THÉÂTRE
Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St., between Bedford and Hudson Sts. 212-239-6200.

THE LAST SUNDAY IN JUNE
Century Center, 111 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200.

LIFE (X) 3
Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 212-239-6200.

THE LION KING
New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4100.

THE LOOK OF LOVE
Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 212-307-4100. (Closes June 15.)

MAMMA MIA!
Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 212-563-5544.

MAN OF LA MANCHA
Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

MOVIN' OUT
Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 212-307-4100.

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

THE PLAY WHAT I WROTE
Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

THE PRODUCERS
St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

RENT
Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 212-921-8000.

SALOME
Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200. (Closes June 12.)

SAY GOODNIGHT, GRACIE
Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

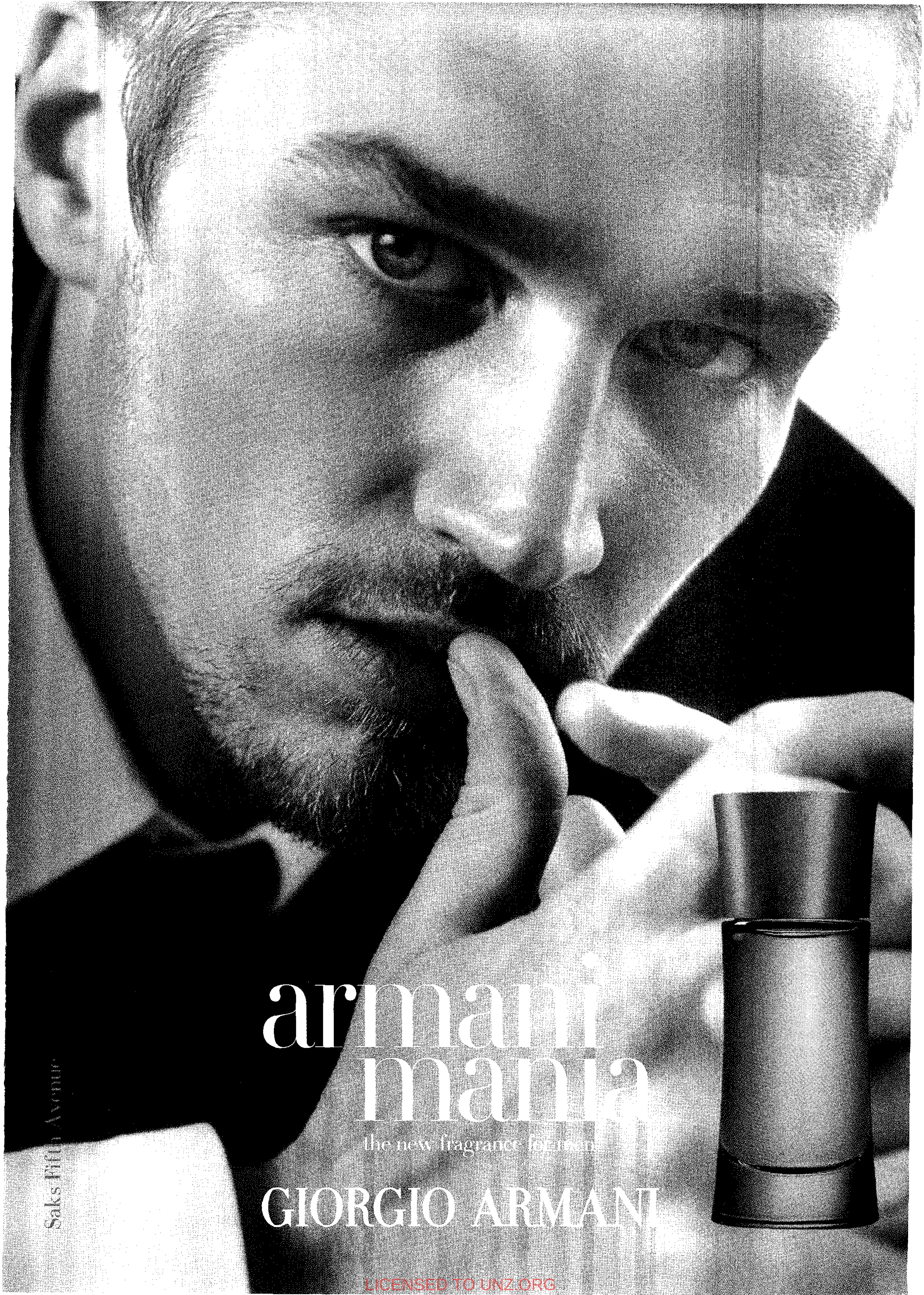
STOMP
Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 212-477-2477.

TAKE ME OUT
Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200.

TEA AT FIVE
Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 212-239-6200.

THOROUGHLY MODERN MILLIE
Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 212-307-4100.

TRUMBO
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 212-239-6200. Mondays only. (Closes June 16.)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Saks Fifth Avenue

URINETOWN
Henry Miller, 124 W. 43rd St. 212-239-6200.
A YEAR WITH FROG AND TOAD
Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200.
ZANNA, DON'T!
John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET
Highlights of the week include two recent Wheeldon dances—"Liturgy" and "Carousel (A Dance)"—and two all-Balanchine programs. ♦ June 4 at 8: "Valse-Fantaisie," "Le Tombeau de Couperin," "Liturgy," "In the Night," and "Glass Pieces." ♦ June 5 at 8: "Hallelujah Junction," "Reliquary," "Vespro," and "Circle of Fifths." ♦ June 6 at 8: "Square Dance," "Vespro," and "Glass Pieces." ♦ June 7 at 2: "Symphonic Dances," "Sonatas and Interludes," "Carousel (A Dance)," and "Brahms-Schoenberg Quartet." ♦ June 7 at 8 (an all-Balanchine program): "Le Tombeau de Couperin," "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," "Ballade," and "Vienna Waltzes." ♦ June 8 at 3 (an all-Balanchine program): "Square Dance," "Ballade," "Tarantella," and "Vienna Waltzes." (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. 212-870-5570. Through June 29.)

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE
The season continues. ♦ June 4 at 2 and 8 and June 5 at 8: "Don Quixote." ♦ June 6 and June 9-10 at 8 and June 7 at 2 and 8: "Romeo and Juliet." (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000. Through June 28.)

JOHN JASPERSE COMPANY
Jasperse uses architectural structures to push the audience's tolerance for suspense and voyeurism to the breaking point in the evening-length work "Just Two Dancers," performed with Juliette Mapp. (Bessie Schönberg Theatre, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. June 5-8 at 7.)

HUBBARD STREET DANCE CHICAGO
The troupe's season at the Joyce continues. (175 Eighth Ave. 212-242-0800. June 3-6 at 8, June 7 at 2 and 8, and June 8 at 2 and 7:30.)

H. T. CHEN AND DANCERS
The Chinatown-based modern-dance company celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary with an evening of new and repertory work at La Mama. (74A E. 4th St. 212-475-7710. June 5-7 at 7:30 and June 8 at 2:30.)

"FACE THE MUSIC & DANCE"
Thank Symphony Space for reuniting the dance of Doug Varone and the music of Steve Reich. Three works have their New York première. "Proverb," Varone's 1997 interpretation of Reich's soaring vocal score, is meditative, like a shaft of light through stained glass. Penitential gestures in slow motion alternate with sped-up mechanical movements that end in hard, audible falls. In the new piece "Of the Earth Far Below," set to Reich's "Triple Quartet," Varone intimates a mood of barely suppressed violence. Hurling themselves across the stage, the dancers collide in perfectly sculpted pileups. Tender interactions are all the more potent for their brevity. And the new duet for Varone and Larry Hahn, "Distance," is set to Reich's "Violin Phase," performed live by members of the Steve Reich Ensemble. (Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400. June 5-7 at 8.)

FLAMENCO VIVO CARLOTA SANTANA
Santana is no purist; the troupe she founded with the late Roberto Lorca in 1983 approaches traditional flamenco with broad theatricality, adding group formations, dramatic scenarios, and lots of props (castanets, fans, poles). For the group's twentieth anniversary, she presents both old and new works. The première "Bailes de Ida y Vuelta," choreographed by the principal dancer Antonio Hidalgo, traces Latin-American influences on flamenco, from Argentinean milongas and Cuban guajiras to New York salsa. Three older works are by Lorca, including "Zapateado," which stamps out rhythms with wooden poles, and "Luz y Sombra," a stately double duet Lorca choreographed in 1986, soon after he was diagnosed with AIDS. In the duet, a seductress in black traps a man in a fatal embrace; her shawl becomes his shroud. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave. 212-242-0800. June 10 at 8. Through June 15.)

BLUM DANCE THEATRE
The Brooklyn Lyceum's excellent acoustics and gigantic, messy space are a good environment for Wendy Blum's eccentric dances about vulnerable human balances. In "Egg Over Easy," the warm wind of a live trumpet-and-trombone duet interacts with Blum's solo contortions, until a tall, muscular man and a tiny, muscular woman invade the space and stage an absurdist power play. Blum likes to confront "extreme and grotesque" aspects of the human condition in a way that normalizes them. Her vigorous quartet, "My Mother's Eyeball," is preceded by a medical video of cataract surgery, and her dancer Kacie Chang, who is seven months pregnant, confounds the audience's preconceptions about pregnancy with a joyous, teasing solo. (Brooklyn Lyceum, 227 Fourth Ave. 347-683-7698. June 5-6 at 9.)

ARTICHOKE DANCE COMPANY
In a Danspace production, the group presents an escapist evening called "Exposing the Heart," which includes "Bobbing for Piranhas," a quintet set to Aerosmith ballads, and "Flight Vision," a solo in which a young woman in a subway car daydreams about shrugging off her corporate shackles. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 212-674-8194. June 5-8 at 8:30.)

"TRIPTYCH"
Mollie O'Brien's Mob Productions presents a series of duets at Joyce SoHo, danced by O'Brien, Jennifer Dignan, and Gina Jacobs, including "Faster Than Dark," "Summoning the Delicate," and "Crushed Raspberries," a demonstration of the push-me-pull-you dynamic of romantic relationships. (155 Mercer St. 212-334-7479. June 5 at 8.)

"MONSTERS AND MIRRORS: HEAVY AT PLAY"
For an evening of accessible pandemonium, Abby Bender has coördinated a large crew of dance enthusiasts, some trained, some untrained, to execute five exuberant, intentionally amateurish dances. In "Joyous, a Circus," the crew, dressed in red-and-white striped outfits, perform imitation circus acts. Other dances include "Bedtime Poems," which uses projected images and a score by Ryan McFaul and Jeremy Wilson, "Septic Crisis" (about a garbage heap that comes to life), and "Flash Dance," a jokey tribute to the music and trends of the eighties. (Triskelion Arts, 118 N. 11th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn. 718-599-3577. June 6-8 at 8. Through June 15.)

"WAKING KYA"
SistersGeographic presents a one-woman dance-theatre work about a refugee from Sierra Leone, written by Siobhan Fitzpatrick and starring the Nigerian actress Frances Uku. Uku delivers a series of dramatic monologues, interlarded with performances by the African Dance Chorus, choreographed by Juson Williams. (Crane Club, 408 Amsterdam Ave. 212-874-4250. June 4 at 6:30.)

NIGHT LIFE
CONCERTS

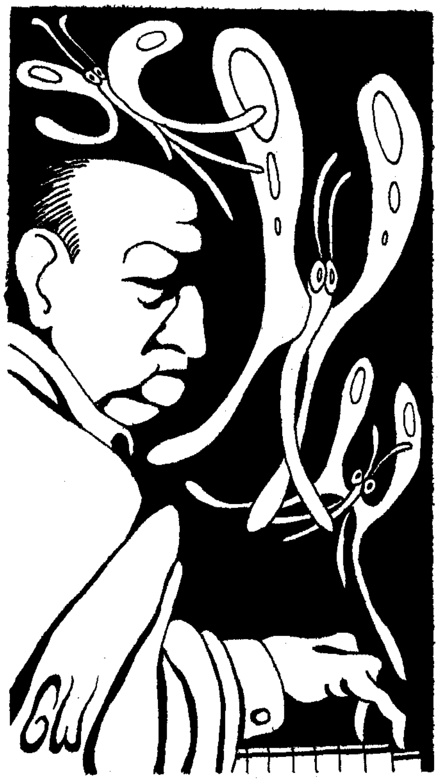
JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER
The underappreciated pianist and composer Herbie Nichols (1919-63) was a musician's musician who recorded only a handful of albums and passed most of his career in obscurity. The work, though, is all golden, with an outsider's tinge as well as a formal perfection that rivals Thelonious Monk's. As Nichols recorded his tunes in piano-trio settings, it's a treat to hear them fleshed out by the Herbie Nichols Project, a horn-driven band that's part of the venturesome Jazz Composers Collective. (Kaplan Penthouse, Rose Building. 212-721-6500. June 5-7 at 8.)

LOVE
The charismatic Arthur Lee returns, this time with a full horn and string section, to celebrate the thirty-fifth anniversary of his seminal album, "Forever Changes." (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 212-840-2824. June 5 at 8.)

GOV'T MULE
The bristling Allman Brothers offshoot led by slide guitarist Warren Haynes heats up Central Park as *Relix* magazine celebrates thirty years of sandals, patchouli, and endless jams. With the pedal steel guitarist **Robert Randolph.** (Rumsey Playfield, Central Park. 212-307-7171. June 6 at 6:30.)

"3 FARMS"
David Johansen, a man of constant reinvention, inaugurates this free summer concert series with his accomplished acoustic band the Harry Smiths, which takes its name from the creator of the hugely influential "Anthology of American Folk Music." (East River Park Amphitheatre. For more information, call 212-353-3315. June 7 at 1.)

GOSPELFEST 2003
Hezekiah Walker and the Love Fellowship Tabernacle Choir, Vickie Winans, Cissy Houston, Donnie McClurkin, and others congregate for an evening of soul-stirring music. (Theatre at Madison Square Garden. 212-307-7171. June 7 at 7:30.)



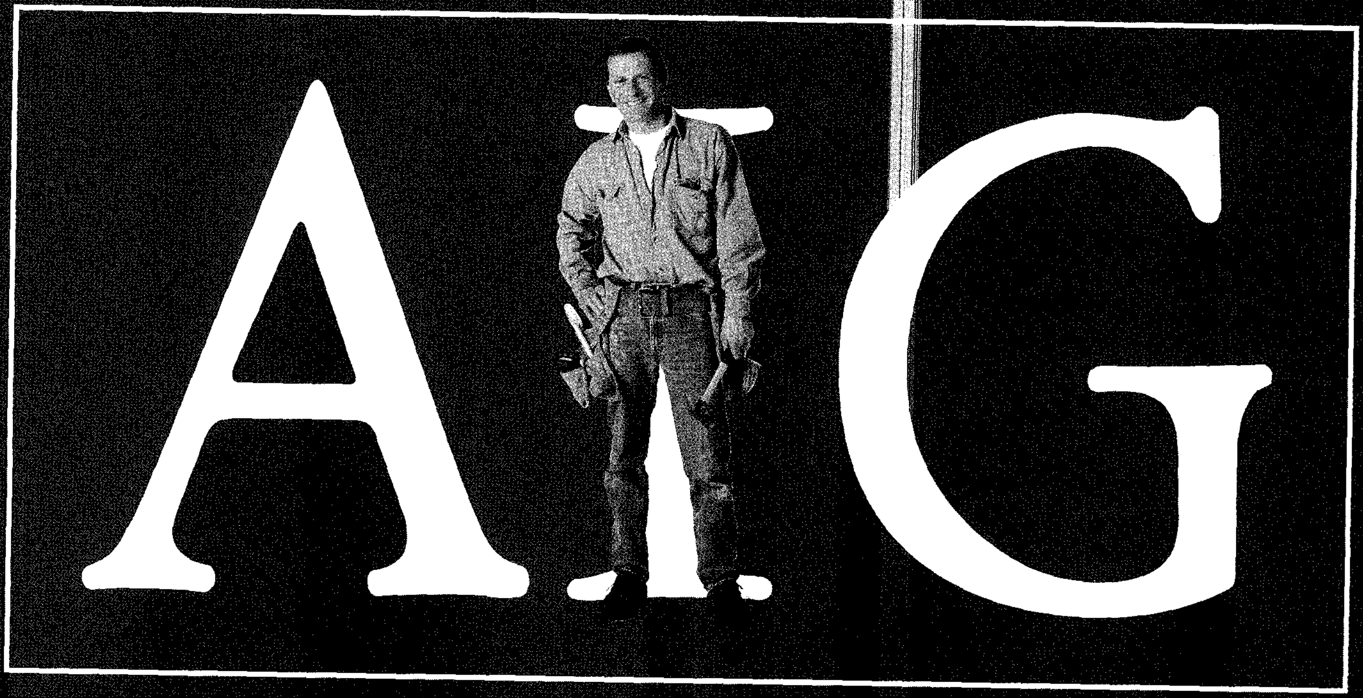
Martial Solal, at Iridium.

WORLD MUSIC INSTITUTE
The final concert of the institute's season takes listeners to the Borneo rain forest, where the Orang Ulu, or up-river dwellers of Sarawak, play a wooden lute with movable, beeswax-attached frets, known as the *sapeh.* Thanks to the influence of missionaries and the popularity of the Western guitar, some speculate, the often heavily decorated instrument can be tuned to produce a pentatonic scale with pitches similar to our major scale; its dreamy tones sound exotic yet familiar. The duo Lan-E-Tuyang, along with the Orang Ulu Dancers, will perform. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. For more information, call 212-545-7536. June 7 at 8.)

DAR WILLIAMS
The clear-voiced and clear-eyed singer-songwriter. (Town Hall. June 7 at 8.)

FIELD DAY
A massive event in the tradition of Lollapalooza and Woodstock, this out-of-town gathering is an indie-rock hepcat's proverbial . . . er . . . field day. Appearances by such alternative-rock elder statesmen as Beck, Radiohead, Sigur Rós, and the Beastie Boys as well as by wunderkinds like the Raveonettes, Bright Eyes, and Interpol are spread out over two days. Expect the trucker-capped entirety of Williamsburg to decamp to eastern Long Island for these forty-eight hours. Note: At press time, permit problems and an environmental lawsuit were threatening to cancel the concert. (Enterprise Park, Calverton, N.Y. 212-307-7171. For

GAHAN WILSON



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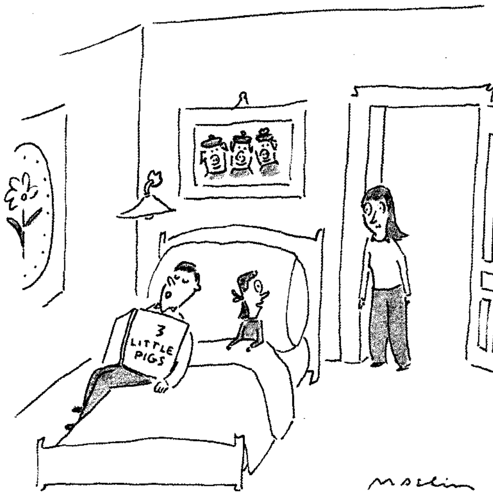

"HE HUFFED AND HE PUFFED
AND THEN HE STARTED SNORING."

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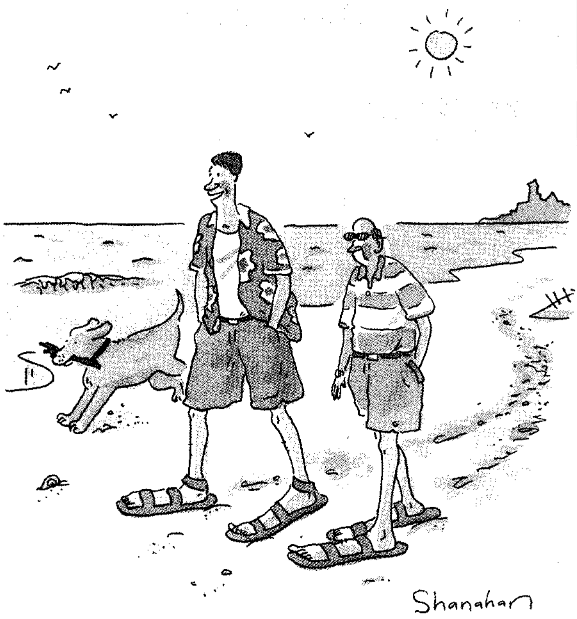

"AND THANKS TO YOU,
I'LL BE ABLE TO FILL THOSE SHOES, DAD."

Thanks for all the moments we've shared, Dad.

Happy Father's Day

You've always given so freely of yourself, Dad.

Happy Father's Day

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Happy Father's Day

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more information, visit www.fielddayfest.com. June 7 from noon to midnight and June 8 from 11 to 11.)

LOU REED
Promoting yet another hits compilation, "NYC Man," and his new musical interpretation of Edgar Allen Poe's "The Raven," the rock icon and famously cantankerous deity of seamless cool returns. (Town Hall. June 10-11 at 9.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—June 5: Veterans of a more innocent and idealistic strain of hip-hop (before bling bling became the order of the day), Georgia's **Arrested Development** reunites to conjure the positive vibes of the early nineties. June 7: The music of **Bo Diddley**—a founding father of rock and roll—gets tougher, louder, and wiser the older he gets. And he does it all with a rectangular guitar.

BOTTOM LINE
15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (212-228-6300)—June 4: **Professor & Maryann.** Like their "Gilligan's Island" namesakes, this long-running Staten Island duo balances the cerebral (courtesy of guitarist-songwriter Ken Rockwell) with dark good looks (the helium-throated singer Danielle Brancaccio). June 6: **Annie Golden** (the former lead singer of the late-seventies C.B.G.B.'s hopefuls the Shirts and Jeannie in Milos Forman's film version of the hippie classic "Hair") is the host of "The Beat Goes On Vol. 16: Year Zero . . . Punk: New York to London." **John Wesley Harding, Jim O'Rourke, Joe Hurley,** and other scenesters and musicians gather for a return to the heady days of D.I.Y. as classics by Blondie, the Clash, the Ramones, and others are dusted off.

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—June 4: One of many local bands to mine the fertile early-eighties post-punk sound, **Radio 4** turns back the clock to an era when meshing angular guitars with Spartan, danceable rhythms seemed like a novel concept. June 6: Despite being championed (and recently covered) by fellow Michiganders the White Stripes, the singer-songwriter **Brendan Benson** plays a hook-heavy brand of sparkling power pop that owes more to the Beatles than to the gritty blues of his pals. June 9: **David Byrne, Kim Gordon, Citizen Cope,** and other downtown hipster musicians join the writers **Jonathan Franzen, Mary Gaitskill,** and **Colson Whitehead** in a benefit for the Carter G. Woodson Cultural Literacy Project, a Brooklyn-based after-school program.

FEZ
380 Lafayette St. (212-533-7000)—June 6-7: The amorphous tribute ensemble known as the **Loser's Lounge** tip their collective hat to the legendary yet undersung British pop practitioners XTC. June 8: **The Real Tuesday Weld,** a.k.a. Stephen Coates, an English pop crooner with a devilish air, makes his New York City début. The **Mingus Big Band** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—June 5: Thanks to the tutelage of a pair of producers known as the DFA, the indie rockers in the **Rapture** have honed their post-punk appropriations to a sharp point, making the band a sweat-inducing groove machine. June 7: The ascendance of the independent record label Def Jux is one of the most encouraging stories of the hip-hop world. Started out of the Red Hook apartment that the founder and rapper-in-charge, El-P, shared with label stars Cannibal Ox, the company has released a stream of records that have consistently been the underground hip-hop record of the month, universally prizing lyrical authenticity over materialistic posturing. And now, to celebrate, the Definitive Jux Summer Spectacular brings in some of the label's marquee acts: **RJD2,** a d.j. with a supreme ear for flow; **Aesop Rock,** a rapper who strikes an intimate, confessional tone; the raging and ragged **Cannibal Ox;** and the headliner, **El-P** himself, whose intensely bitter intonation and rhymes overloaded with syllables produced one of last year's most striking albums, "Fantastic Damage."

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (212-219-3055)—June 4: The woefully under-recognized rock group the **Clean** practically invented the music scene of their native New Zealand in the early eighties. June 6: The industrious downtown guitarist **Gary Lucas** (he's played with Leonard Bernstein, Captain Beefheart, Jeff Buckley, and others) celebrates fifteen years of fretboard adventures (his latest include a foray into mid-twentieth-century Chinese pop) at this Tribeca musical bazaar.

NORTHSIX
66 N. 6th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-599-5103)—June 6: **Elliott Smith.** The slacker troubadour and onetime Oscar nominee (thanks to his lachrymose work on the soundtrack to "Good Will Hunting") has kept a low profile since releasing his 2000 album, "Figure 8." This has not, however, resulted in a shortage of lovesick, acoustic-guitar-driven material.

VILLAGE UNDERGROUND
130 W. 3rd St. (212-777-7745)—June 6-7: Cleveland's **Rocket from the Tombs** was a seminal mid-seventies ensemble of weirdos whose music trod a fine line between arty experimentalism and slack-jawed rock brutality. The band's core eventually gave way, and its members split into two separate entities—the avant-garde Pere Ubu and the slovenly Dead Boys. Twenty-eight years later, the original members David Thomas (who back then sang under the name of Crocus Behemoth) and guitarist Cheetah Chrome reunite (aided by the Television guitarist Richard Lloyd) to relaunch the rocket.

TABLES FOR TWO

P. J. CLARKE'S
915 Third Ave., at 55th St. (212-317-1616)—Thirty, forty, fifty years ago, P. J. Clarke's was the swell's last stop of the night and the lush's first: it was the inspiration for Nat's Bar, in "The Lost Weekend," and Richard Harris used to go there directly from the airport and order up six double vodkas at once. It isn't easy for an establishment as legendary as this hundred-and-nineteen-year-old saloon to survive an ownership change and a thorough renovation without coming in for some abuse from the regulars. But the new owners—a group that includes Timothy Hutton, the actor, and Philip Scotti, the owner of Docks Oyster Bar and Sarabeth's—have given it a good shot. They've preserved everything from Jessie (a stuffed dog that has presided over the front room since the fifties) to the famous, towering urinals ("You could stand Abe Beame in one of them and have room to spare," Frank Sinatra, an old regular, supposedly said). There was some grumbling over Jessie's move to the back room (she's been returned to her original spot), and the urinals, which are now illuminated with track lights, look like Matthew Barney installations. But, to be fair, all that the new guys did, besides completely overhaul the building's innards, was spiff up the joint. They even kept the old menu, with its unorthodox pricing ($15.15 for the fish and chips).

Now it's a scene again, though for a different set. One is reminded that this little brick boxcar of a building is surrounded by office towers. The new bosses brought in a few bartenders who have a loyal East Side following, and the aged cranky waiters have been replaced by a squad of smart-alecks in thick-rimmed eyeglasses. The biggest change may be that you can't smoke, an indignity you can't pin on Tim Hutton. (There's also a fancier restaurant upstairs, Sidecar, which employs the speakeasy gimmick, in vogue these days, of being accessible, by a separate door with an intercom, only to members and to diners with reservations.) Still, once you're seated in the back room, amid the old wood and bevelled glass, you concede, sentimentality aside, that there ought to be more places like this in New York: killer chili, supreme bacon cheeseburgers, spinach salad, shepherd's pie, all escorted by an armada of frosty mugs. The fish and chips—a big batter-fried filet of sole with frites, preferably doused in malt vinegar—manages to be both pubby and delicate, like a Boddingtons ale rendered in solid form. (Open daily for lunch and dinner. Entrées $7.95-$24.)

—*Nick Paumgarten*

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

BAM CAFÉ
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4139)—June 6-7: **Greg Osby** is the modern bandleader to put your money on. He's an altoist with his own sound—bright and metallic-toned, with a rhythmic energy that follows its own skewed metronome—and he's fast becoming the Art Blakey of his day, collecting a coterie of bright young players around him. Dining.

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—June 5-7: On her latest album, "Paganini: After a Dream," the violinist **Regina Carter** used the classical master's own eighteenth-century instrument; rest assured, that treasure won't be with her at this midtown gig. Carter's blend of classical and jazz may come off a tad genteel on the recording, but her live performance promises more of the infectious zest and improvisational daring she's known for. Dining.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—Through June 8: Smooth jazz also needs its virtuosos, and in **Larry Carlton** the genre has a guitarist whose extraordinary facility matches his silken tone. Steely Dan fans who remember Carlton's crunchy work on, say, "Kid Charlemagne" may not warm to his current jazz-pop mix, but Carlton's partisans can't get enough of it.

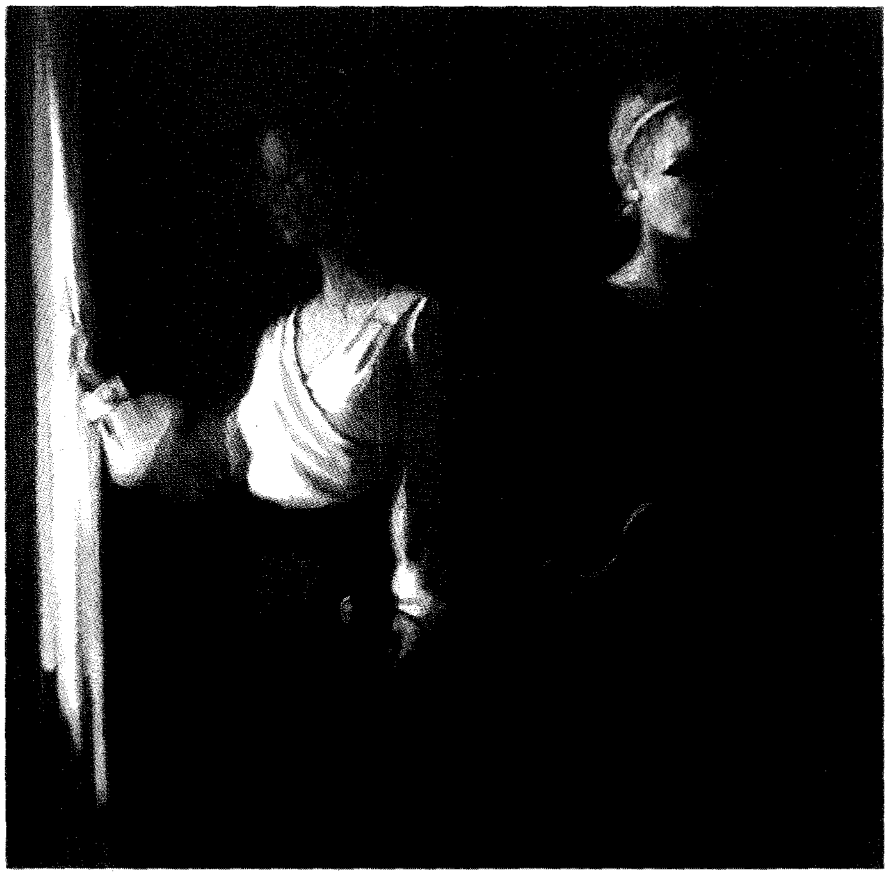
IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—Through June 8: The **Martial Solal** trio. Solal, a Frenchman by way of Algeria who has been lighting up the Continent for some fifty years, has never risen above cult status in this country, but he's still one of the world's premier jazz pianists. This visit is his second trip to the States in decades (he last played New York the week of September 11, 2001), and it finds the extraordinary stylist collaborating with one of his most simpatico partners, the alto saxophonist **Lee Konitz.** A genuine cultural event. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—Through June 8: The **Houston Person** quartet. Though Person is without the late Etta Jones, his longtime vocal partner, the earthy tenor saxophonist, balancing grit and romantic persuasion, has lost none of his power to woo an audience. Dining.

SWEET RHYTHM
88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (212-255-3626)—June 5: It's not every sixty-year-old music veteran who'll mix it up with a d.j., but **Oliver Lake** has never been your average jazz saxophonist. Lake Effect brings this new-jazz giant together with his sons Gene, on drums, and Jahi, on the turntables. June 6-7: **Lake** heads for more familiar musical terrain with his vigorous, on-again-off-again big band.

VILLAGE UNDERGROUND
130 W. 3rd St. (212-777-7745)—June 10: **Tisziji Muñoz,** a guitarist with a mystical bent and a reputation for sonic explorations, is capable of some brave choices: his New York band includes the saxophonists **Ravi Coltrane** and **Pharoah Sanders** and the "Late Show" bandleader, **Paul Shaffer.**

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Through June 8: The **Jim Hall** trio. Some guitarists



"Red Room," by Lisa Yuskavage, at Boesky.

are bent on cramming together as many notes as possible, but Hall plays the instrument with a jeweller's touch: a gorgeous chord here, a lyrical phrase there, a perfectly placed note ringing in luxurious space. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-879-5500)—After witnessing the atrocities of the First World War as a medic, the German painter Max Beckmann took up Expressionism to "reproach God for his errors." The museum recently acquired the famous "Hell" portfolio, eleven black-and-white lithographs that chronicle Beckmann's visit to Berlin in 1919 during the March Rebellion, when twelve hundred people were killed in two days. The original owner of the portfolio, the industrialist Hugo Stinnes, appears in a stinging caricature as a puppeteer dangling a marionette emperor, surrounded by human skulls and sacks of cash. This series' masterful balance between chaotic and carnivalesque is an amuse-bouche for the artist's retrospective opening at MOMA QNS at the end of June. Through Aug. 31. ◆ A playful roof-garden sculpture—a painted aluminum cottage with a red roof, white and yellow walls, and a blue chimney—by Roy Lichtenstein, the late Pop artist, sits on its own little lawn with a sign warning viewers to keep off the grass. Through Nov. 2. ◆ **"Manet/Velázquez: The French Taste for Spanish Painting."** Through June 29. ◆ **"Art of the First Cities: The Third Millennium B.C. from the Mediterranean to the Indus."** Through Aug. 17. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART (MOMA QNS)
33rd St. at Queens Blvd., Long Island City (212-708-9400)—Back in 1964, when Andy Warhol began shooting his **"Screen Tests,"** a three-minute "live" portrait might have seemed like an amusing but slight conceit. Since then, the burgeoning influence of the format (cf. Thomas Struth's huge projected portraits recently exhibited at the Metropolitan), along with the explosion of reality media, has made those first performances look eerily prescient. They're also captivating, partly because Warhol chose so many charismatic and beautiful subjects, among them Dennis Hopper, Gerard Malanga, Edie Sedgwick, Salvador Dali, and "Baby" Jane Holzer, who does some of the sexiest toothbrushing imaginable. Through Sept. 1. (Open Thursdays, Sundays, and Mondays, 10 to 5, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"Kazimir Malevich: Suprematism"** is a concise, bewitching show of paintings, drawings, and sculptures—many of them making their first trip outside Russia—that vivify the artist's revolutionary art and ideas. His definitive "Black Square," from 1915, is in terrible physical shape; it suffered in Soviet archives during Malevich's long official suppression. A tragic air extends even to mint-condition Suprematist works, which, with deep roots in Western aesthetics and Russian mysticism, conjured a Utopia of matter-of-fact materiality and cerebral rapture. Malevich confidently claimed that he worked in five "measures," the fifth being "economy." In the spell of his grandiose and doomed optimism, one can well believe that or pretty much anything. This show is important to any general assessment of modern art. Through Sept. 7. ◆ **"Matthew Barney: The Cremaster Cycle."** Through June 11. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3676)—In this retrospective devoted to the works of Elie Nadelman, more than two hundred sculptures, arranged chronologically, trace the evolution of Nadelman's concerns: from his early busts, which speak to ancient ideals of beauty, to his jazz-era middle works, folksy wooden genre figures of dancers and circus performers with sinuous bodies and gessoed features, to his final postwar efforts, rows of plaster figurines that look like toy-size gods and monsters. Through July 20. ◆ **"Paul Sietsema: Empire."** Through June 8. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6; Fridays, 1 to 9.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART
Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—Robert Lesser, whose collection of toy robots wintered at the museum a couple of years ago, has loaned another pop trove: more than a hundred paintings for the covers of pulp magazines, primarily from the thirties and forties. The artists were academically trained illustrators like J. Allen St. John, Rafael De Soto, and Walter Baumhofer, and they worked in a fiercely competitive environment that nourished pictorial testosterone. If you're curious to see the unreconstructed masculine id in action or haven't sublimated a thirst for bound blondes or spurting pistols under titles like "The Grove of Doom," this exhibit is a kitsch cornucopia. Through Aug. 31. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

JENNIFER ALLORA AND GUILLERMO CALZADILLA
The artists raise sly questions about the nature of site-specific installation as solar batteries charged in San Juan provide the power for the pink, red, and yellow fluorescent tubes in Dan Flavin's 1965 sculpture "Puerto Rican Light (to Jeanie Blake)." Around the corner, the ceiling flashes from green to yellow to red (it looks like a topsy-turvy dance floor) thanks to a traffic light (in San Juan again) that relays a signal to the gallery in real time. Through July 20. (The Americas Society, 680 Park Ave., at 68th St. 212-249-8950.)

SHARON ELLIS
Charles Burchfield meets hot-rod artist Big Daddy Roth in numinous landscapes by a Los Angeles painter whose surfaces appear airbrushed but are in fact laboriously hand-worked. (Ellis produces just two to three paintings a year.) Each of the four paintings in her New York début depicts an element (air, water, earth, and fire). Even the water thrums with electric light; the blue ripples evoke flame as much as fluid. Through June 27. (Artemis Greenberg Van Doren, 730 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 212-445-0444.)

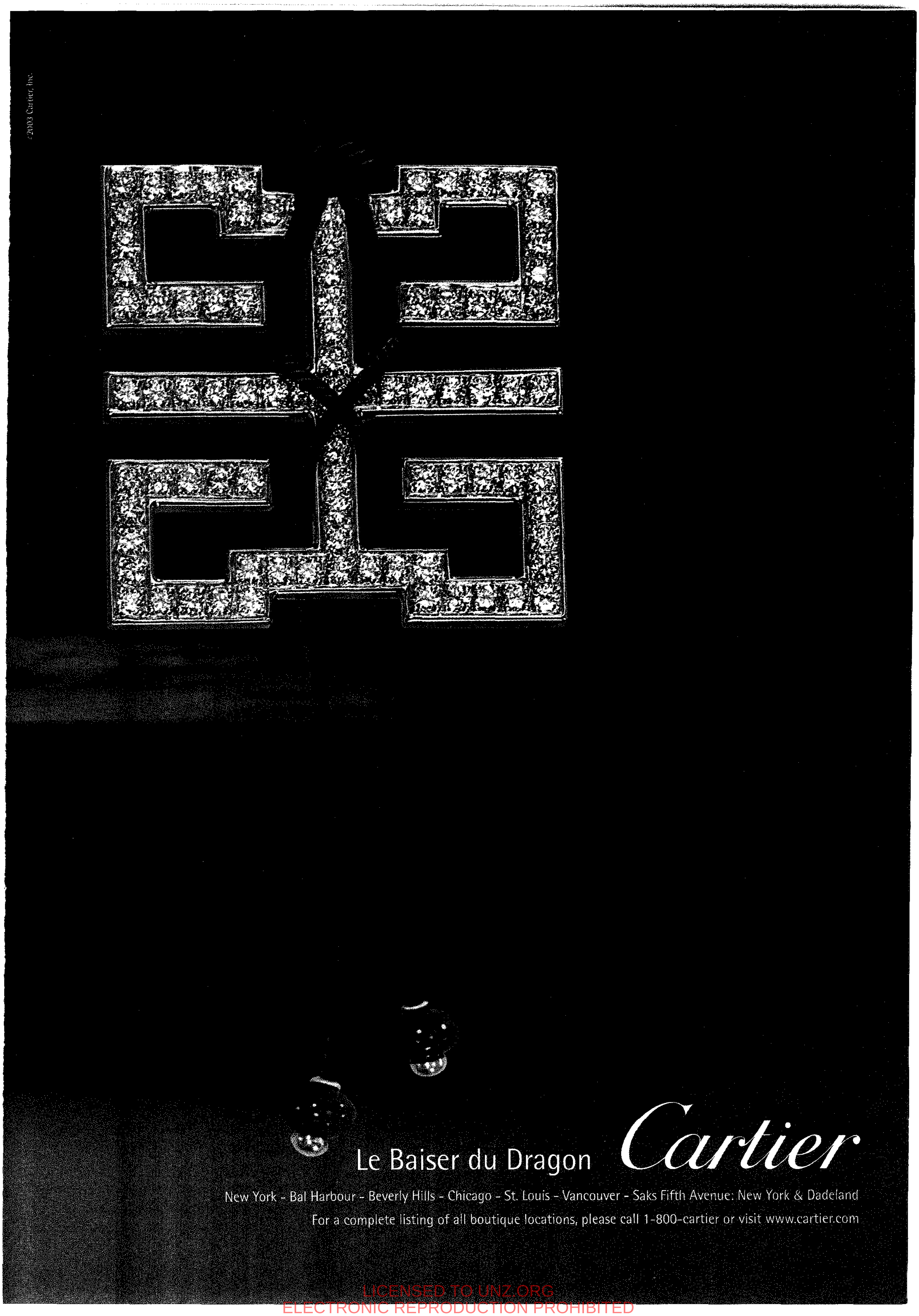
Short List

THOMAS SCHÜTTE
Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St.
212-977-7160. Through June 28.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

FRANCESCO CLEMENTE
In this first New York show since his 1999 retrospective, Clemente offers pictures so dreamy and sappy that you wonder how on earth he got to be the titan he was during the eighties. Vast trite symbols, most of them morbid, sexual, or art historical, float in vaporous pastel surfaces. The silliest of the lot features a pair of gigantic snowflakes with precisely rendered vulvas at their center: every woman is unique, evidently. The show seems dismissable, but as you leave, you feel a little tug. Is art really a kind of unembarrassed simplemindedness? There's something winning about the suggestion. Through June 21. (Gagosian, 555 W. 24th St. 212-741-1111.)

DAN FLAVIN
Is it odd to think of an eight-foot standard fluorescent light fixture, set at an angle on the wall, as classical art? "The Diagonal of May 23, 1963," the simplest of six spare, white Flavins now illuminating Paula Cooper's vast space, was his first fluorescent. It announced a new beauty, at once melting and stern, that now feels more authoritative than ever. The other works, dating from 1964 to 1995, array tubes (from two to five apiece) in lovely combina-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tions of warm and cool whites. Here was an artist who really made something out of nothing. The show is a plugged-in Parthenon. Through June 30. (Paula Cooper, 534 W. 21st St. 212-255-1105.)

ELLSWORTH KELLY

The most joyous show in town is a triple feature: two-part painting-constructions at Marks's Twenty-second Street space, shaped single canvases on Twenty-fourth, and a retrospective of self-portrait drawings on Twenty-first. Kelly's eccentric and august abstraction used to feel marginal to minimalism; here it runs a victory lap. The two-part works (canvases abutted, overlapped, or suggesting a surface folded back on itself) put black and white, orange and green, black and purple, and other clarion color combinations in grand play. The single canvases—typically, polygons with one curved side—are like colored moods: black indolence, blue rashness, purple worry, white ecstasy. In the twenty-eight drawings, made between 1944 and 1986, Kelly sees himself as a shy guy subject to fits of transfiguring style. All shows through June 28. (Matthew Marks, 522 W. 22nd St., 523 W. 24th St., 529 W. 21st St. 212-243-0200.)

DAMIEN LOEB

His name has become a catchword for unmerited success, but that doesn't happen to every callow young Photo-Realist. It's Loeb's technique that has kept him afloat in the face of so many critical torpedoes. Slick, precise, radiant, with a faint fuzziness that distinguishes it from airbrushing or Richterish blur, Loeb's touch has a kind of quasi-Venetian finesse. It's lovely. His iconography is a different matter. The borrowings from megaplex favorites like "Alien," "2001," "Poltergeist," "Friday the 13th," and "Jaws" are transparently puerile, almost painfully desperate to come across as a highbrow take. Through June 28. (Mary Boone, 541 W. 24th St. 212-752-2929.)

MICHAEL RAEDECKER

This English artist, recently short-listed for the Turner Prize, sews metallic thread through his canvases to make faint, drab images, augmented by washes of mousy color. Their labor-intensive ugliness reads as a kind of contrarian come-on. Most are adorned with allusive, inscrutable motifs: a Turkish tent, a Picasso vase, phallic vegetation, cigarettes. If representational painting has to go to these kinds of lengths to look unfamiliar, maybe it's just not worth the trouble. Or perhaps uningratiating is simply British for sexy. Through June 28. (Andrea Rosen, 525 W. 24th St. 212-627-6000.)

LISA YUSKAVAGE

The women in Yuskavage's paintings—no longer the erogenous mannequins that irked audiences in the early nineties, but not quite real people either—prowl and preen in a voluptuous, anticipatory haze. Sometime soon, phones or doorbells will ring. In the meantime, these plump, snub-nosed creatures work themselves over in front of the mirror, assessing outfits, bracelets, perfumes, postures. Yuskavage's world suggests a boudoir version of "Waiting for Godot," a place where sex is always feared, desired, imminent, and remote. In an art world that's full of borrowings from literal, in-your-face porn, Yuskavage's soft-core sublime sets her apart. Through June 27. (Boesky, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-680-9889.)

Short List

JOEL SHAPIRO
Pace Wildenstein, 534 W. 25th St.
212-929-7000. Through July 31.

FRANK STELLA
Kasmin, 293 Tenth Ave., at 27th St.
212-563-4474. Through June 28.

FRED TOMASELLI
James Cohan, 533 W. 26th St. 212-741-9500.
Through June 21.

GALLERIES–SOHO

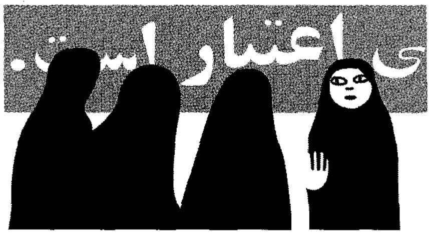
AIDAS BAREIKIS

The Lithuanian-born sculptor's third show is a sort of goth parade float, composed of shredded Halloween accessories and dime-store kitsch. Manned by leering marionettes whose bodies spurt foam insulation at every seam or orifice, the assemblage has

BOOK CURRENTS

Growing Up Middle Eastern

The Turkish novelist and translator Güneli Gün grew up on an Aegean island once used to quarantine pilgrims returning from Mecca. In **REMEMBERING CHILDHOOD IN THE MIDDLE EAST: MEMOIRS FROM A CENTURY OF CHANGE** (Texas), an anthology edited by Elizabeth Warnock Fernea, Gün recalls her anger at her parents' refusal to love Quarantine Island. Her mother missed cosmopolitan social life; her father, a doctor, ridiculed his staff and railed about "'the agony of the East,' by which he meant the scientific backwardness he believed Islam had 'brought upon' us."



RICHARD McGUIRE

Amid the jarring disruptions of life in Tehran during the nineteen-eighties, Marjane Satrapi could at least confide in her parents. Her comic-book memoir, **PERSEPOLIS: THE STORY OF A CHILDHOOD** (Pantheon), describes her pain at seeing her country descend into fundamentalism and violence. Satrapi was patriotic; she was relieved to see her father cheer when the BBC confirmed that Iranian bombers had hit Baghdad. Later, though, the slogans scrawled on city walls ("To die a martyr is to inject blood into the veins of society") made her fearful that the country's turn toward bellicosity was too extreme.

Firoozeh Dumas's family left Iran permanently in 1976, and missed the seismic shifts back home. In **FUNNY IN FARSI: A MEMOIR OF GROWING UP IRANIAN IN AMERICA** (Villard), Dumas remembers how in 1977 her parents accepted an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., to welcome the Shah. Undeterred by a threatening note slipped under their hotel-room door ("Dear Brainwashed Cowards, You are nothing but puppets of the corrupt Shah . . ."), the family finally reassessed the trip after demonstrators attacked Iranians on a lawn near the White House with nail-studded sticks. Their response? To take the first flight back to California.

—*Kate Taylor*

a kind of glittering exuberance. The only wrong note is the Watteau-inspired title, "Le Charme de la Vie," which gives the piece a highbrow pedigree and a sarcastic tenor that don't suit its campy cheer. Through June 6. (Koenig, 249 Centre St. 212-334-9255.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

ARNOLD ODERMATT
Part of the playfulness of Odermatt's photos of car crashes is attributable to the cars themselves, blocky, snub-nosed Volkswagens from the late nineteen-fifties; crumpled fenders and smashed tail-lights aside, they appear more like shiny, slow-moving beetles than like mauled lumps of machinery. Odermatt, a Swiss police photographer, first took official accident-scene pictures and later struck out on his own. Without the contextualizing visuals of a crash—blood, fatalities, collateral damage—the cars assume an inert coolness. Also on view are Odermatt's sly staged images of the police force. In his carefully composed tableaux (taken between 1963 and 1981), the officers direct traffic, frisk a suspect in the woods, and tear about on motorcycles, grinning heartily all the while. Through June 7. (Morris, 465 W. 23rd St. 212-727-2752.)

RONG RONG
For a brief time in the mid-nineties, there was a bohemian area near Beijing called the East Village. Like-minded artists were drawn there by the cheap rent—what else?—and the photographer, who moved there from the southern province Fujian and changed his name, documented their exploits. The performances sound rather unpleasant. A naked man covered himself in honey, then hung out in a fetid public rest room, attracting flies; the same man, suspended from a ceiling by chains, had doctors cut him with scalpels, and the blood then dripped onto hot metal. These acts and others quickly got the attention of the local police, who shut the East Village down. The pictures are all that's left of the eerie collective, and they're powerful reminders of a short-lived post-Tiananmen Square avant-garde. Through June 21. (Chambers, 210 Eleventh Ave. 212-414-1169.)

MARIANA YAMPOLSKY
The Mexican photographer, who died last year, fled Europe as a child and studied at the University of Chicago before finding her muse in Mexico City. She first went there in 1944 to work with the former Bauhaus director Hannes Meyer but soon turned to photography and studied with Lola Alvarez Bravo. The sampling of her work on view here serves as a fitting testimony to her love of the people and forms found in Mexican life. Like Edward Weston, Yampolsky was fascinated by the dangerous flesh of maguey cacti, but her gift was to render with her lens the nobility and diversity of the country's indigenous groups. Through June 28. (Throckmorton, 145 E. 57th St. 212-223-1059.)

"THE PAINTED PHOTOGRAPH"
With the advent of photography, Indian artists working in the tradition of painted miniatures began to add pigment to the images of noblemen and religious scenes, and the results vary from the sublime to the surreal. Not afraid to add enormous jewels or bright turbans to the sitters' ensembles, the artists sometimes left only the face without a heavy layer of paint but would more often leave nothing untouched. Maharajas gave way to well-to-do businessmen and professors as the practice endured into the twentieth century, and there are a number of women holding babies and purses, or striking aggressively modern poses. One image of a young prince of the Nawanagar House is a particularly subtle example of the technique, and a small lantern slide, "The Rulers of India," makes the "Sgt. Pepper's" album cover look like a Puritan class photo. Through July 12. (Sepia, 148 W. 24th St. 212-645-9444.)

Short List

ROBERT ADAMS
Roth Horowitz, 160A E. 70th St. 212-717-9067. Through June 14.

JONATHAN TOGORVNIK
Klotz/Sirmon, 511 W. 25th St. 212-741-4764. Opens June 5.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S
June 4 at 10:15 A.M. and 2: Fine jewelry. ♦ June 6 at 10:15 A.M.: The first of two sessions of a sale of decorative art works features a selection of furniture and glass by twentieth-century Art Nouveau artists, along with a range of contemporary American works. ♦ June 6 at 2: The auction closes with an impressive afternoon section; highlights include three animal sculptures by Rembrandt Bugatti and more than a hundred lots of Tiffany glass. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.)

CHRISTIE'S
June 4 at 10 A.M.: The monthly House Sale, a selection of moderately priced furniture, art works, and decorations. ♦ June 5 at 10 A.M.: Twenty-five items from the collection of Eric Clapton highlight a sale of watches by Rolex, Audemars Piguet, and Patek Philippe. ♦ June 5 at 2: Christie's second annual automobile auction, featuring cars from the nineteen-thirties to the present; highlights include a 1970 Lamborghini Miura P400S once owned by Frank Sinatra (expected to bring up to two hundred thousand dollars) and "Greased Lightnin'," a 1950 Chrysler New Yorker convertible used to promote the 1972 Broadway production of "Grease." (Note: The cars will be on public view June 3-5 in Rockefeller Plaza, between 49th and 50th Sts.) (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.)

DOYLE
June 4 at 10 A.M.: "Belle Époque," an auction of decorative art works from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. (175 E. 87th St. 212-427-2730.)

SWANN
June 5 at 10:30 A.M.: American watercolors and drawings. (104 E. 25th St. 212-254-4710.)

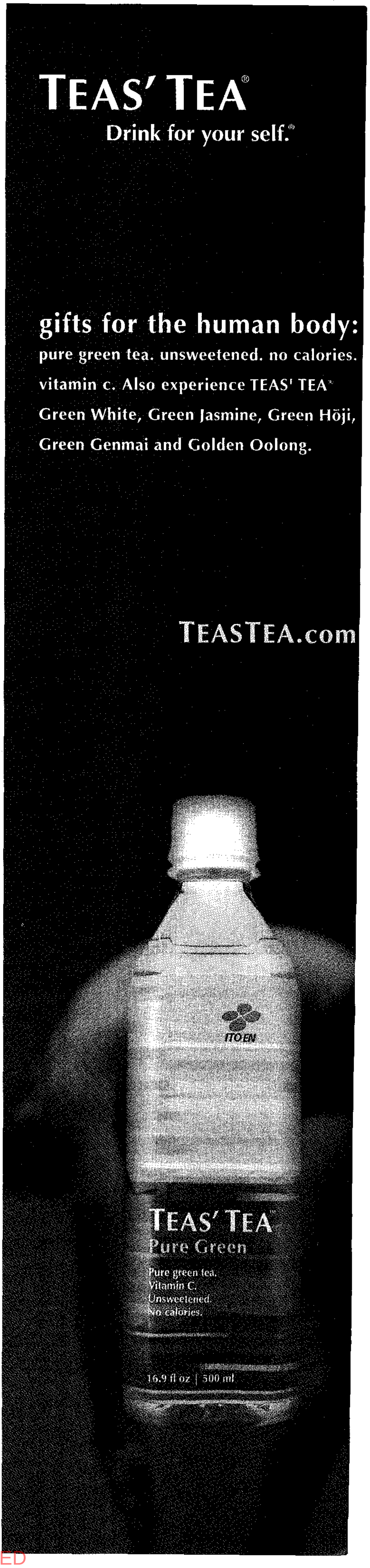
CLASSICAL MUSIC
OPERA

"MET IN THE PARKS"
Each summer the Metropolitan Opera, normally the most exclusive of cultural domains, spreads its wings throughout the city's parks for a round of free performances; Puccini's **"Turandot,"** the first of two operas to be offered in repertory ("Lucia di Lammermoor" will be added next week), opens the series on Central Park's Great Lawn. The cast features Andrea Gruber, a robust American soprano who came into her own at the Met this season, in the title role, along with Hei-Kyung Hong, Franco Farina, and Oren Gradus; Joseph Colaneri conducts. (Enter at 86th St. June 10 at 8. No tickets necessary. For more information, call 212-362-6000.)

AMATO OPERA
The Lower East Side's feisty chamber-opera group, in its last production of the season, squeezes **"Andrea Chénier,"** Giordano's verismo spectacle of the French Revolution, into its pint-size theatre. Anthony Amato directs and conducts. (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 212-228-8200. June 6-7 at 7:30 and June 8 at 2:30. Through June 15.)

OPERA COMPANY OF BROOKLYN
Puccini's one operetta, **"La Rondine"** (a lighter treatment of the "La Traviata" story line), has never quite settled into the repertory, and the dissatisfied composer made three separate versions of it. Jay D. Meetze's little company will present Puccini's original version in concert, with piano accompaniment, at the Brooklyn Heights First Unitarian Church; Elizabeth Hastings conducts. (50 Monroe Pl., at Pierrepont St. June 7 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

PARIS NATIONAL OPERA: "LES BORÉADES"
Operagoing is seldom a more refined experience than when one attends a performance by Les Arts Florissants; William Christie, the ensemble's director, makes a fetish of exactitude, but his re-creations of the great works of the French Baroque have an exquisite, concentrated energy that is unsurpassed. He is a favorite at BAM, and for his latest production he teams up with a longtime collaborator, the director Robert Carsen, to produce Rameau's mythological *tragédie en musique*, a remarkably



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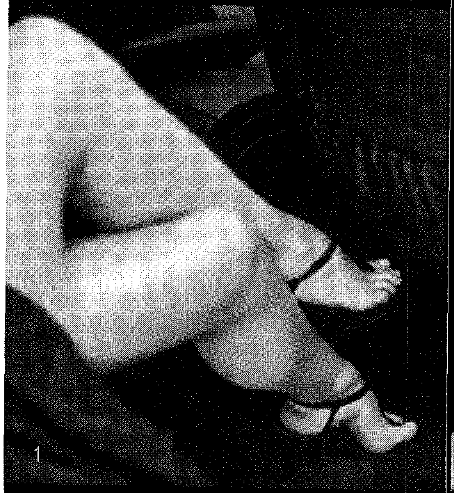
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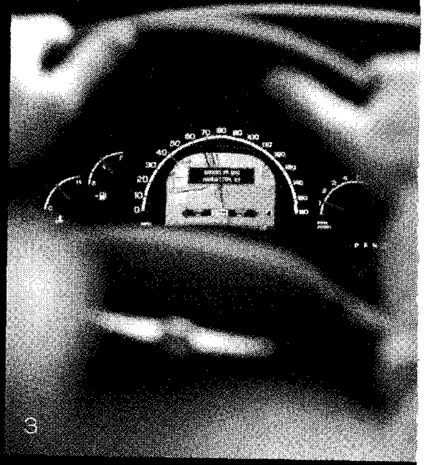
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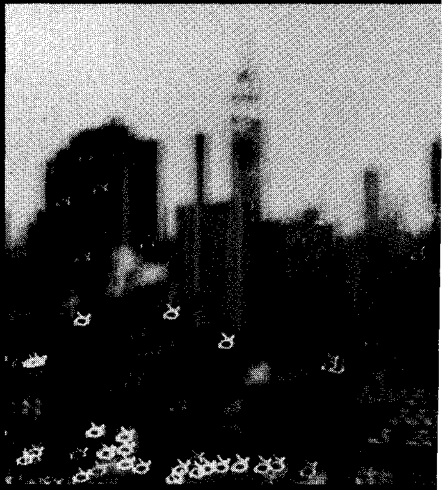

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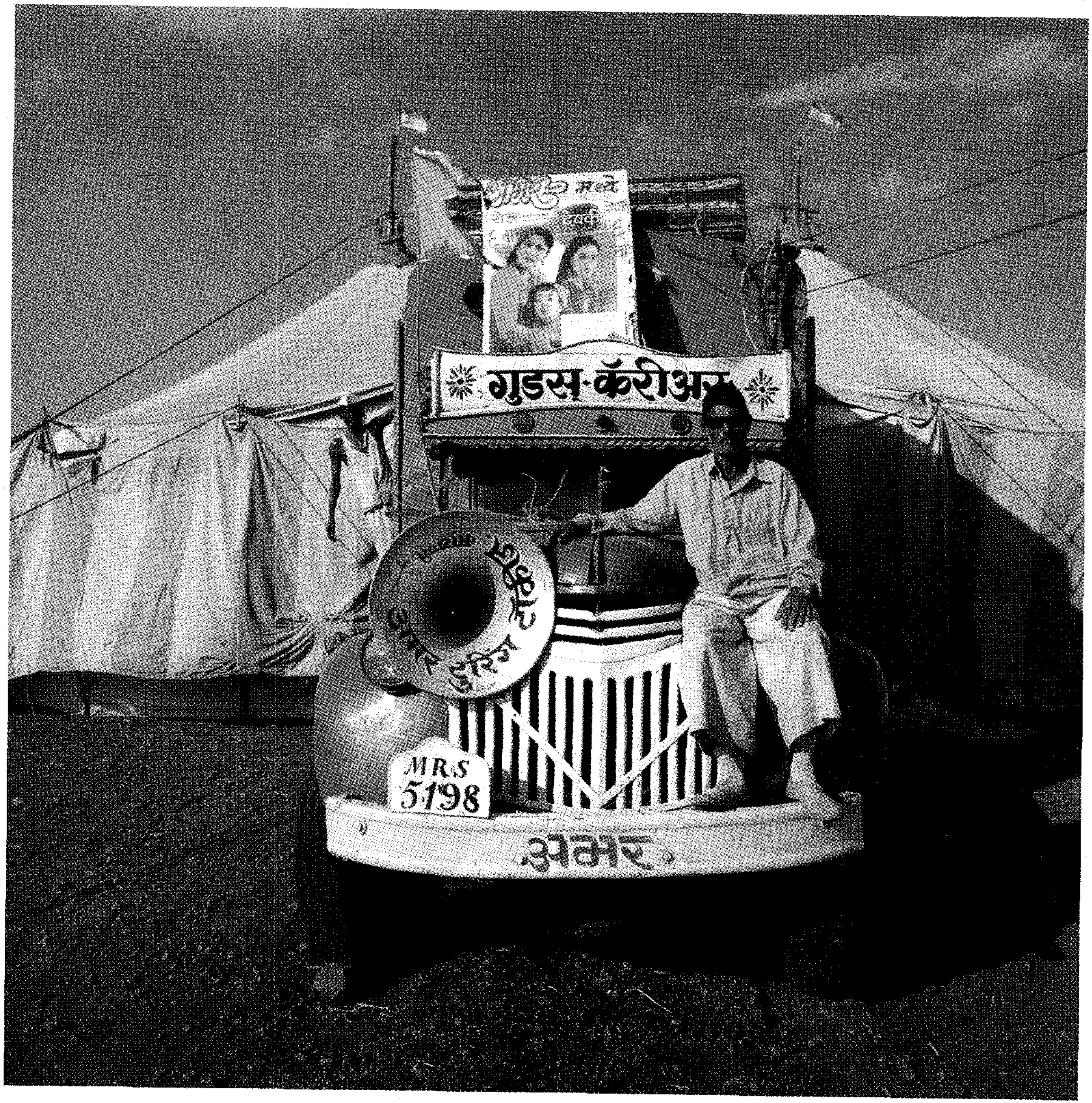


A projectionist from one of India's last touring cinemas, in a photograph by Jonathan Torgovnik, at Klotz/Sirmon (see Photography).

vigorous and daring work that brought the composer's long operatic career to a fiery close. Anna-Maria Panzarella, Paul Agnew, and Laurent Naouri are among the featured singers. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. June 9 at 7:30. Through June 15.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
Lorin Maazel, casting against type, enlists the veteran Viennese pianist Rudolf Buchbinder to be the soloist in Gershwin's Concerto in F, the cornerstone of a mostly American program that includes music by Harris (the Third Symphony, a streamlined one-movement masterpiece), Varèse ("Amériques"), and Debussy ("Prélude à l'Après-Midi d'un Faune"). (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656. June 5 at 7:30 and June 6-7 at 8. ♦ Note: Maazel will also conduct the Debussy and Gershwin works in a special "rush hour" concert on June 10 at 6:45.)

ORPHEUS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
In what has got to be the most prestigious lunchtime church concert of the season, members of the exemplary conductorless ensemble alight at Trinity Church to perform a program honoring the composer-violinist Arcangelo Corelli and the composers he influenced, including Purcell, Tartini, and Locatelli. (Broadway at Wall St. June 5 at 1. A donation is suggested.)

RIVERSIDE SYMPHONY
For an end-of-season gala, the orchestra offers a concert of orchestral and chamber music featuring guest soloists from the past and present (including two elegant and adventurous young artists, the violinist Timothy Fain and the pianist Frederic Chiu). The program includes pieces by Weill (the "Little Threepenny Music"), Bach (the Concerto for Two Violins in D Minor), Mendelssohn, Prokofiev (Chiu's own arrangement of the "Lieutenant Kijé" Suite), and Anthony Korf. (Alice Tully Hall. 212-721-6500. June 5 at 8.)

CHORAL SYMPHONY SOCIETY AND NEW YORK CANTATA SINGERS
David Labovitz directs his charges in Handel's oratorio "Hercules," their final offering of the season. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. June 8 at 3. Tickets at the door.)

RECITALS

COSMOPOLITAN CHAMBER PLAYERS
The Players, an excellent ensemble of conservative tastes led by the violinist Eric Grossman, offer a program of Beethoven, Brahms (the Trio for Clarinet, Cello, and Piano, featuring Jon Manasse, the new principal clarinet of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra), and Shostakovich (the Piano Trio No. 2). (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. June 4 at 8.)

BARGEMUSIC
Innovative programming is almost becoming the norm at Olga Bloom's floating chamber-music series; this week's offering is a round of four single concerts, in which the members of Sequenza, a recently formed group of three vibrant soloists—the violinist Mark Kaplan, the cellist Colin Carr, and the pianist Yael Weiss—can show off their individual virtuosity before performing a finale *en famille*. June 5 at 7:30: Copland's Piano Variations and Chopin's Sonata in B Minor are the bookends for Weiss's concert, which also includes music by Schumann and Beethoven. ♦ June 6 at 7:30: Kaplan takes his turn with a program of solo works by Bartók, Ysaÿe, Berio (Sequenza VIII), and Bach (the Partita No. 2 in B Minor). ♦ June 7 at 7:30: Carr performs Bach's Suites Nos. 2, 3, and 6. ♦ June 8 at 4: A concluding concert of trios by Haydn, Brahms (the Piano Trio in C Minor), Bright Sheng, and Ravel. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

ST. LUKE'S CHAMBER ENSEMBLE: "THE OUT-OF-TOWNERS"
The group applies its talents to music by San Francisco's Pamela Z (a work for cello and live electronics), Atlanta's Alvin Singleton, and Minnesota's Libby Larsen (her Piano Trio No. 2); Boston's John Harbison, a ubiquitous figure for quite a while, anchors the program with "Twilight Music," for horn, violin, and piano. The musicians, who perform within an installation of contemporary art works, include the cellist Myron Lutzke and the hornist William Purvis. (Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St. 212-594-6100. June 7 at 2.)

JAPAN SOCIETY: CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER
A commissioned work by the American composer Lee Hyla—whose music incorporates world-music influences into a smart and rugged rock-modernist aesthetic—is the centerpiece for a gala program by the Society that also features music by Poulenc, Ravel ("Chansons Madécasses"), and Takemitsu. (333 E. 47th St. June 5 at 8. For information about performance-only tickets, call 212-752-3015.)

"FREE FOR ALL AT TOWN HALL"
David Finckel, the cellist of the Emerson Quartet, and his wife, the pianist Wu Han, are the latest in a succession of topnotch musicians to offer their services in the enterprising new series of free chamber-music concerts. Their program, with two intervals, offers *all* of Beethoven's sonatas for cello and piano—quite a deal. (123 W. 43rd St. June 8 at 5. Tickets, limited to two per customer, will be available at the box office at noon on the day of the concert.)

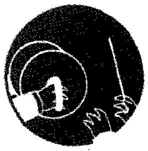
DANIEL BARENBOIM: THE BEETHOVEN PIANO SONATAS
The brilliant Israeli conductor, pianist, and intellectual, as close to a Renaissance man as classical music offers these days, begins an eight-concert series traversing all of Beethoven's thirty-two piano sonatas, a mini-festival that will close Carnegie Hall's spring season. Barenboim, never one to do things by halves, has been playing the complete cycle in concert since the age of seventeen; these will be authoritative, though sometimes harsh, interpretations. His first concert is one of extremes, ranging from the intense classicism of the Sonata No. 1 in F Minor to the stormy "Hammerklavier" (the Sonata No. 29), with the Sonata No. 18 in E-Flat Major in between. (Isaac Stern Auditorium. 212-247-7800. June 10 at 7:30. ♦ Note: As a prelude to the cycle, Barenboim will discuss the sonatas in a talk with Ara Guzelimian, Carnegie Hall's artistic adviser, at Weill Recital Hall on June 9 at 7:30.)

OUT OF TOWN

HUDSON VALLEY CHAMBER MUSIC CIRCLE
As a prelude to its grand summer season of orchestral music, opera, and theatre, Bard College hosts this intimate three-concert series, which begins with a joint recital by the pianists Ursula Oppens and Jerome Lowenthal, who offer music by Debussy ("En Blanc et Noir"), Rorem, Ravel ("La Valse"), and Schubert. (Olin Hall, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y. 518-537-6665. June 7 at 8.)

MUSIC MOUNTAIN
This longtime series, devoted to the art of the string quartet, offers its concerts in a simple, pastoral setting that boasts one of the finest chamber-music halls around. The seventy-fourth season begins with a concert by the Shanghai String Quartet and the pianist Ruth Laredo, who offer works by Beethoven (the third "Razumovsky" Quartet), Yiwen Jian, and Dvořák (the Piano Quintet in A Major). (Routes 63 and 126, Falls Village, Conn. 860-824-7126. June 8 at 3.)

CLASSICAL NOTES



LOUISVILLE SLUGGERS
In 1948, the Louisville Orchestra, then only a decade old, was awash in red ink. The board president, Charles Farnsley, and the conductor, Robert S. Whitney, proposed a radical solution. Instead of trying to entice the public with a parade of star soloists, the orchestra would spend its money on commissioning new American music and putting it on record. Ten years later, the group had gained financial health and international renown—and First Edition, its very own record label.

Now, as the ensemble faces yet another fiscal crisis, the Santa Fe Music Group is releasing a series of remastered anthology disks, each dedicated to a single composer. Santa Fe's managing director, Matthew Walters, is a fan of the vinyl era, and he reveres the First Edition originals, most of which were supervised by the Columbia Records producer Howard Scott. The two-track system Scott often used (when he wasn't in sessions with Glenn Gould or the original cast of "My Fair Lady," that is) may seem simple today, but it offers that genuine in-the-hall feel that traditionalists cherish.

The releases have an appealing range, and you may find that those old clichés about American music—its "freshness," its "innocence"—really have some merit after all. George Crumb goes beyond the anodyne Berg-Webern style of his early "Variazioni" to create the savage mysteries of "Echoes of Time and the River" (which earned him a Pulitzer Prize in 1968); John Corigliano works through his Barber-Bernstein inheritance in two charming early works to devise his own savage rhetoric in the brawny Piano Concerto. Roy Harris celebrates his American roots in robust works like "Kentucky Spring," while the gentler Henry Cowell (in the Japanese-influenced "Ongaku for Orchestra," or the science-fictiony sounds of "Seven Rituals of Music") seems bent on creating a roots music for a country of his own devising. All the performances, which were recorded with several conductors over three decades, do these pieces justice, but Whitney's, in particular, have something special: a sense of mission that today's troubled ensembles, taking their own risks, will have to discover for themselves.

—*Russell Platt*

ABOVE AND BEYOND

READINGS
June 4 at 8: Eric Schlosser reads from his new book, "Reefer Madness: Sex, Drugs, and Cheap Labor in the American Black Market." (Rocky Sullivan's, Lexington Ave. at 28th St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ June 4 at 8: Saidah Arrika Ekulona, James Naughton, and David Rakoff read stories by Edwidge Danticat, Michael Chabon, and Leonard Michaels, who all contributed to "The Best American Short Stories 2002." Sue Miller, the collection's editor, will also be on hand. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400.) ♦ June 7, starting at 1:30: During an afternoon-long celebration of the three-hundredth anniversary of St. Petersburg, which will also include music, dance, drama, art, and a film screening, the actress Yelena Solovey reads from the poems of Anna Akhmatova, and Yelena Dovlatova reads from the work of Sergei Dovlatov. (Brooklyn Public Library, Grand Army Plaza. For more information, call 718-230-2417.)

TALKS
June 4 at 8: The "Little Gray Book" lecture series returns with a how-to installment about the finer points of negotiating deals and contracts. Speakers include D. Christian Guion and M. Jesse Handelman, who will reënact great moments in big business, Robert Hager, a former organ salesman, who will give tips on closing a deal, and Carol Kolb, of *The Onion*, who will discuss how to properly handle an arbitration involving waffle portions. (Galapagos, 70 N. 6th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn. 718-782-5188.) ♦ June 5 at 6: Aileen Ribeiro, of the Courtauld Institute of Art in London, talks about Whistler's portrayal of late-nineteenth-century women's fashion. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 212-288-0700.) ♦ June 7 at 3: Record executives join the actress Sherie Rene Scott and the Broadway music coördinator Seymour Red Press to talk about original-cast recordings. (Bruno Walter Auditorium, New York Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center. For more information, call 212-870-1630.)

WALK
June 7 at 1: Steve Brill, the author of "The Wild Vegetarian Cookbook," leads an excursion through Prospect Park to forage for herbs, flowers, and edible plants. For more information, call 718-230-2780.

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AND: A calendar of *New Yorker* events across the country

MOVIES OPENING

THE EYE

A supernatural thriller about a young blind woman who receives a corneal transplant, after which she begins to see ghosts. Directed by the Pang brothers. In Cantonese, Mandarin, and Thai. Opening June 6. (Angelika Film Center and 42nd Street E Walk.)

GARMENTO

Michele Maher wrote and directed this comedic sendup of New York's fashion industry. Opening June 6. (Village East Cinemas.)

LOVE THE HARD WAY

A drama about a small-time New York crook and ladies' man (Adrien Brody) who falls in love with a straitlaced graduate student (Charlotte Ayanna). Pam Grier plays a detective. Peter Sehr co-wrote and directed. Opening June 6.

2 FAST 2 FURIOUS

John Singleton directed this car-chase movie, set within Miami's illegal street-racing circuit. The cast includes Paul Walker, Eva Mendes, Tyrese, Ludacris, Devon Aoki, and Cole Hauser. Opening June 6.

WATTSTAX: THE SPECIAL EDITION

A thirtieth-anniversary rerelease of Mel Stuart's documentary of the celebrated 1972 concert. With performances by Isaac Hayes, the Staple Singers, and others, as well as appearances by Jesse Jackson and Richard Pryor. Opening June 6.

THE WEATHER UNDERGROUND

Sam Green and Bill Siegel directed this documentary, about the radical offshoot of S.D.S., which includes interviews with Bernardine Dohrn, Bill Ayers, Kathleen Cleaver, Mark Rudd, and others. Opening June 4. (Film Forum.)

FILM NOTES

L'AUBERGE ESPAGNOLE

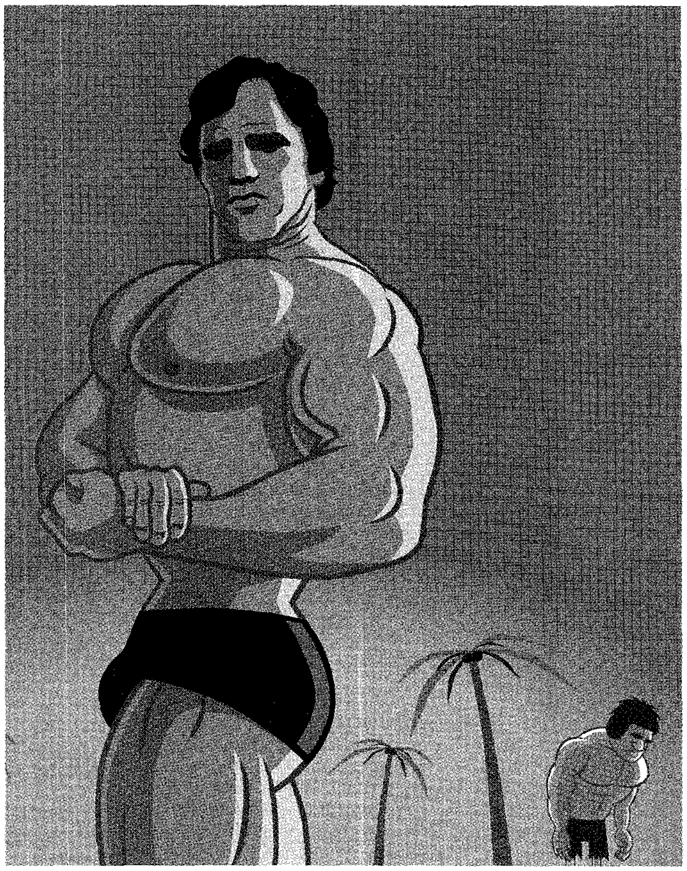
The title of Cédric Klapisch's film means, in French slang, a free-for-all. This charming, utterly undramatic sketchbook movie is about a twenty-five-year-old Parisian graduate student, Xavier (Romain Duris), who goes to Spain as part of a European exchange program and lives with a polyglot mix of students in a cramped walkup apartment. The hero is instructed in lovemaking techniques by a lesbian roommate; he then has an affair with a luscious but vacuous married woman (Judith Godrèche). Not much happens, but the characters, searching for romance and good times, wander through Barcelona's handsome ochre streets, across the Gaudi pavilions and the sun-drenched piazzas; the movie is as much a love letter to the slowed-down erotic pleasures of the city as the New Wave films were to the endless social and intellectual enchantments of Paris. Shot with a lightweight digital camera, the movie, unimportant in itself, opens up possibilities for new, casual styles of filmmaking.—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 5/19/03.) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, New York Twin, and Union Square.)

BEND IT LIKE BECKHAM

A crowd-pleasing British movie devoted to the radical idea that girls can play soccer and sprain their ankles. Jess (Parminder Nagra) is a Sikh who hides her love of the game from her conservative parents, while Jules (Keira Knightley) is a tomboy who defies her English mother. Both have a thing for their Irish coach, Joe (Jonathan Rhys-Meyers)—he of the wounded knee and the watery eyes. The movie is a hodgepodge: nicely barbed scenes with Jess's family bump against weird practice montages that play like sports-bra ads. What it all adds up to is multicultural empowerment for the pre-teen shin-guard crowd.—*Michael Agger* (Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kew Gardens Cinema, and Sunshine Cinema.)

BRUCE ALMIGHTY

Jim Carrey as an all-powerful being? Please, God, no. In this underwhelming comedic parable, Carrey is the titular Bruce, a "wacky" Buffalo newscaster who is granted dominion over his home town by God (Morgan Freeman in a white suit). Sketchy comic conceits can sometimes be saved by inspired performances, but no one besides Carrey seems to be having much fun, and he's relying on his goofy faces again. The movie's subtext refers to Carrey's own career: his character uses his powers to become an anchor and do "serious news" but then decides that making people laugh is just as worthy. Fair enough, but the laughs never arrive. With Jennifer Aniston, who looks frightened most of the time.—*M.A.* (Astor Plaza, Battery Park 16, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)



At BAM, Arnold Schwarzenegger in "Pumping Iron."

CAPTURING THE FRIEDMANS

Andrew Jarecki's startling documentary offers an approach to truth as richly nuanced but ultimately as futile as Kurosawa's great "Rashomon." In 1987, in Great Neck, Long Island, the police arrested a beloved retired schoolteacher, Arnold Friedman, and his son Jesse on the charge of sexually abusing the young boys who regularly gathered at the Friedman home for computer lessons. Jarecki interviews the police, the attorneys, the judge, and the alleged victims in the case, but the heart of the movie is the family's own footage: the layers of Friedman home movies and stills and the voluminous videos shot by David Friedman, the oldest Friedman boy, throughout the crisis. The two accused men were part of a loving family of five, although Mrs. Friedman, emotionally stranded by her husband, was not part of the jokes and camaraderie. Before our astounded eyes the entire fantastic mess unfolds like a bloody Greek legend—the House of Atreus reincarnated in a middle-class Jewish family. Edited by Richard Hankin.—*D.D.* (6/2/03) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

THE DANCER UPSTAIRS

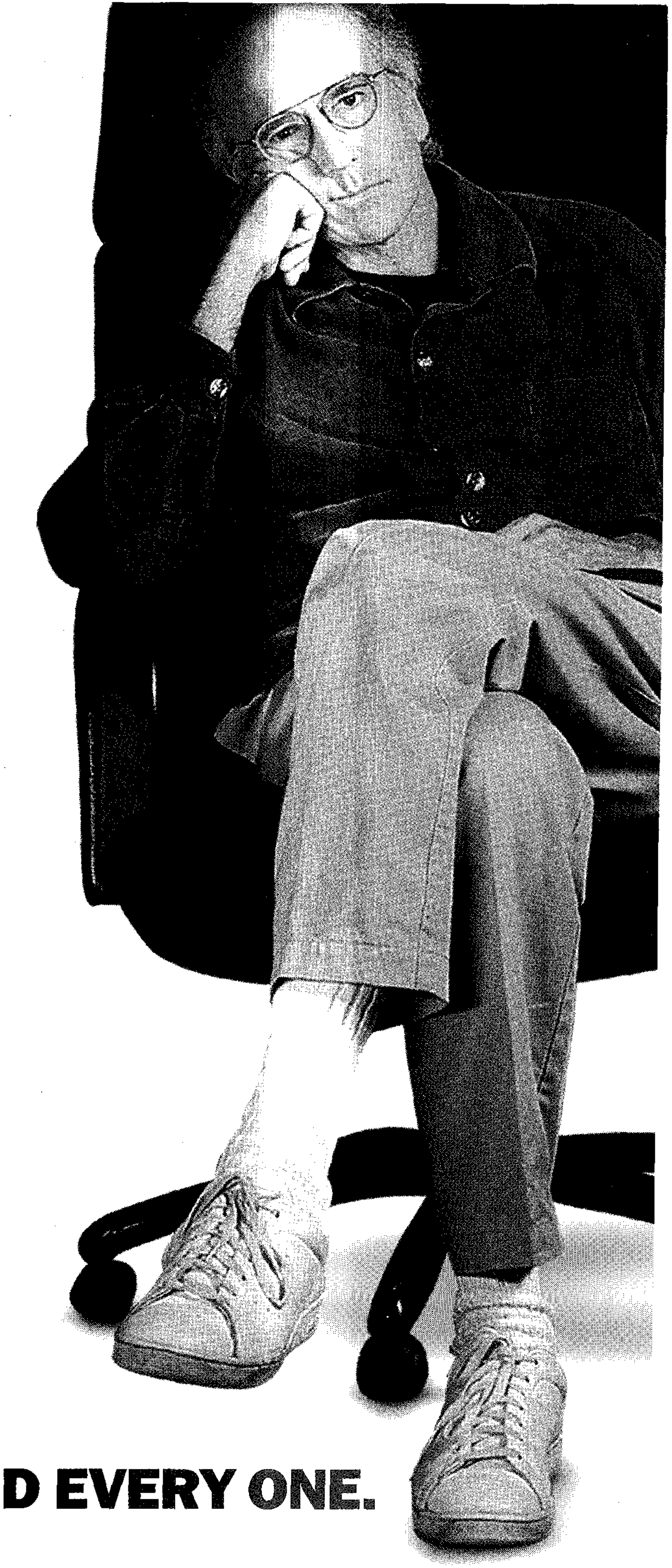
John Malkovich's premier effort as a movie director, an adaptation of Nicholas Shakespeare's 1995 novel about the hunt for a Shining Path terrorist in Peru, is at times rather vague. Malkovich rushes through some of his scenes, and his Spanish, French, and Argentinean actors fail to sound colloquial and relaxed in English. But the movie has a sinister atmosphere that begins to work on you. In the nameless capital city (i.e., Lima), cryptic, intimidating posters show up on the street and dead dogs with menacing signs around their necks are found hanging from lampposts. The revolutionaries are everywhere and nowhere, a murderously mischievous presence; they are like artists of revolution, staging their gruesome acts at their own convenience, and Malkovich doesn't prepare us for the horrors or underline them with ominous music. With Javier Bardem as the civilized policeman who pursues the terrorist for years and Laura Morante as a ballet teacher who may be involved in dangerous activities.—*D.D.* (5/5/03) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kew Gardens Cinema, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Sunshine Cinema.)

DOWN WITH LOVE

A lo-cal attempt at no-sex romantic comedy, a genre that was hardly substantial in the first place. Ewan McGregor plays Catcher Block, a writer for *Know* magazine in 1962. Renée Zellweger plays Barbara Novak, a mannequin lightly disguised as a best-selling author. The plot stitches them loosely together, as Catcher, the unreconstructed Lothario, tries to force Barbara, the scourge of soft hearts, to fall in love with him. It is hard to divine the purpose behind this pastiche: is the director, Peyton Reed, making sport of the innocent froth that passed for romance in a more innocent era, or is he aiming to revive it as a straight exercise in retro style? Can one simply drop an outdated genre into the laps of modern moviegoers and hope that it still works? The gags wander between the sweet and the unconsciously filthy, and the project's principal appeal will be to devotees of early-sixties hemlines. Indeed, given the blinding array of colors on show, the movie may be viewed most fruitfully under the influence of early-sixties pharmaceuticals. With David Hyde Pierce as Block's editor, who really *isn't* gay.—*Anthony Lane* (5/26/03) (Battery Park 16, Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, East 85th Street, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, 62nd & Broadway, 34th Street Theatre, Union Square, and Ziegfeld.)

MICHAEL WELDON

His life is just one episode after another.



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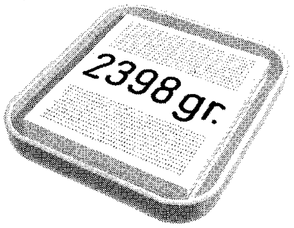
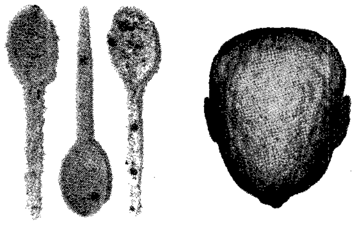


2398 gr. is the title of a book interpreting food—a fundamental cultural and anthropological stimulus. Exploring our relationship with food, the techniques of contemporary art; food as fetish, ritual, dependence, festivity, emotion, pleasure, obsession, chemistry, relation or fear. Fabrica invited acclaimed and emerging artists to contribute a personal piece to the project. Contributors include Alan Fletcher, Anna Fox, Marti Guixé, Reed Kram, Javier Mariscal, Stephan Sagmeister, Wolfgang Tillmans, James Victore, Andrej Zdravic and many more.



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FINDING NEMO
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Empire 24, 84th Street Sixplex, Orpheum VII, and Union Square.)

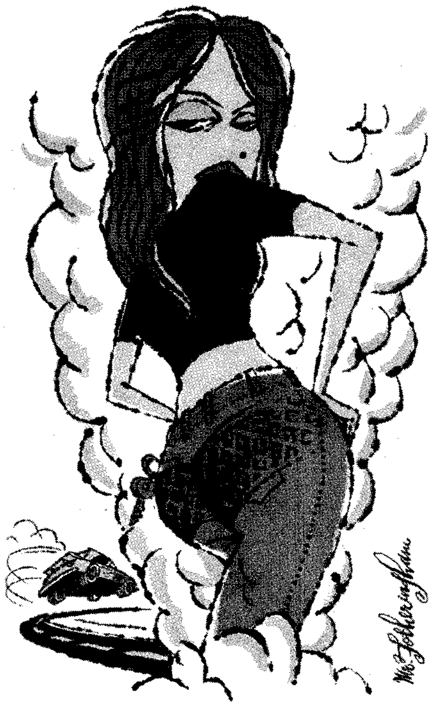
FORBIDDEN PLANET
The best of the science-fiction interstellar productions of the fifties lifted its plot and atmosphere from Shakespeare: the magical island of "The Tempest" becomes the planet Altair-4, where the sky is green and the sand is pink and there are two moons. The magician Prospero becomes the mad scientist Morbius (Walter Pidgeon); Prospero's daughter, Miranda, who knows no man except her father, is Altaira (Anne Francis); and (though this is less clear) the sprite Ariel becomes Robby, the friendly robot. Caliban has become a marvellously flamboyant monster out of Freud—pure id. It's a pity the film, directed by Fred Wilcox, didn't lift some of Shakespeare's dialogue: it's hard to believe you're in the heavens when the diction of the hero (Leslie Nielsen) and his spaceship-mates flattens you down to Kansas.—*Pauline Kael* (Thalia Theatre; June 7-8.)

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY
It remains a deliriously overscaled pursuit movie about three opportunistic treasure hunters in the sunburned Southwest—the Good (Clint Eastwood), the Bad (Lee Van Cleef), and the Ugly (Eli Wallach)—racing for buried rebel gold while the Civil War still rages. Yet the restoration of one more quarter-hour to the hundred-and-sixty-one-minute English-language version of Sergio Leone's 1966 spectacle allows viewers to appreciate even more the director's unique take on the Western. With the help of the composer Ennio Morricone and the cinematographer Tonino Delli Colli, he turns it into opera, imbuing shakedowns, shootouts, and everything in between with ineluctable rhythms, grand gestures that alternate with telling details, and resonating symbols derived from pulp fiction and pulp history. The additional scenes mostly flesh out the wartime texture, which adds an ironic underscore to the antiheroes' reduction of life to guns and money. If the limited, bullet-eyed expressions of Eastwood and Van Cleef keep this film from rising to the grand kitsch emotions of the director's "Once Upon a Time" epics, Wallach's hyperactive Mexican bandit (a vaudevillian extension of his character in John Sturges's critically underrated "The Magnificent Seven") transforms bouts of wheedling and revenge into black-comic arias.—*Michael Sragow* (Film Forum; June 4-10.)

LILYA 4-EVER
Lilya (Oksana Akinshina) is a chirpy girl of sixteen, sunk in a stagnant backwater of what used to be the Soviet Union. She is, to all intents and purposes, orphaned when her witch of a mother abandons her to seek a life in America. Lilya starts with practically nothing and goes downhill from there, winding up selling her body to the vulpine patrons of a bar; what redeems the movie—what renders a squalid experience quite sacred in its intensity—is the vehemence with which the writer and director, Lukas Moodysson, asks whether his heroine has also sold her soul. The caustic portrait that he paints of his native Sweden, to which the deluded Lilya is transported in her quest for a future, has brought him both outrage and acclaim; what is beyond doubt is the brio of his storytelling and the branding of the girl's misfortune onto our hearts and nerves. With Artiom Bogucharski as the artless dodger who becomes her only friend. In German, Swedish, English, and Russian.—*A.L.* (4/21 & 28/03) (Cinema Village.)

MAN ON THE TRAIN
The French director Patrice Leconte, having flitted from one genre to the next with movies as different as "Ridicule" and "The Girl on the Bridge," has now settled on his most consoling subject: the comedy of good companionship. Johnny Hallyday (who was, in his time, France's answer to Elvis) plays Milan, a low-level hit man who arrives, at the bluish end of a day, in a small French town and accepts the offer of a room from Manesquier (Jean Rochefort), a retired schoolteacher. For an hour, not much happens, and we are granted the languorous—and, to many filmgoers, increasingly rare—pleasure of watching two people lock gently together. They even trade roles: Rochefort, the most playful melancholic in cinema, learns to fire a gun, while Hallyday takes up pipe and slippers. All of this is delectable: Leconte has a taste for minor, chewed-up lives, and you can't help sighing with regret as he gathers his wits and hurries the plot toward an unnecessary climax. In French.—*A.L.* (5/12/03) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Cinema 1, and Sunshine Cinema.)

THE MATRIX RELOADED
Neo (Keanu Reeves), the One, fights a courtyard of replicant Agent Smiths (Hugo Weaving), who are all in black suits and ties, in what is perhaps the wittiest digital spectacle yet, and there's a bumper-cars-on-the-freeway episode that outdoes all such previous scenes. But most of this sequel, written and directed by the brothers Larry and Andy Wachowski, is heavy-spirited and pompous, even faintly embarrassing. At Zion, the city deep within the earth where the free humans live (all the others, trapped in the simulated reality of "the Matrix," are controlled by machines), a boring multiethnic saturnalia goes on forever. The movie has the portentous hollowness of so much bad sci-fi, in which the world is always about to end, but nothing else much matters, or makes any sense. The original, with its touch of the uncanny, has a special appeal for techno-geek teen-agers and perhaps for certain intellectuals who feel trapped in a corporate-controlled culture that they are powerless to fight. Instead, they turn themselves into hip theoreticians of simulated reality, an idea no more interesting than the gaga psychedelic fantasies of the sixties era.—*D.D.* (Angelika Film Center, Battery Park 16, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Village East Cinemas.)



Eva Mendes in "2 Fast 2 Furious."

A MIGHTY WIND
The latest satirical documentary from the writer-director-actor Christopher Guest and his wonderful stock company. This one, set in the present day, is about a reunion of schlock commercial folksingers (of the Peter, Paul & Mary or Ian & Sylvia type) from the sixties, and though the movie is not as funny as "This Is Spinal Tap" or "Best in Show" it's brighter and more revivifying than anything else around these days. Guest's subjects, in all these films, are people from the drearier corners of show business who are so deep within whatever it is they do that they have lost all traces of self-consciousness. His films are, in the end, not so much mock documentaries as records of a deep-down dorkiness that becomes a form of blessedness. Guest is a realist who loves his subjects. With Eugene Levy, Catherine O'Hara, Michael McKean, Parker Posey, et al. Ed Begley, Jr., is particularly good as the Swedish-born public-television executive who drops Yiddish into every sentence in order to re-

EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM

main a success in New York.—*D.D.* (5/5/03) (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Kew Gardens Cinema, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 72nd Street East, and Village East Cinemas.)

PUMPING IRON

This 1977 documentary about bodybuilding launched Arnold Schwarzenegger into media superstardom. George Butler, who co-directed with Robert Fiore, later mused that Schwarzenegger was the ideal hero for the "me" decade. Here he's a Teutonic Muhammad Ali, complete with the humor, the seductive arrogance, and the ruthless mind games—but without Ali's poetry or a commitment to any goal larger than the greater glory of his perfect anatomy. The filmmakers set up mini-narratives around the competition of Mike Katz and Ken Waller for Mr. Universe (the amateur world title) and of Schwarzenegger, Lou Ferrigno (TV's Incredible Hulk), and Franco Columbu for Mr. Olympia (the pro title). But Schwarzenegger dominates—talking about sculpting his own body to achieve total symmetry or practicing psy ops on the bigger, taller, and younger but woefully insecure Ferrigno, whose speech and hearing difficulties and complicated relationship with his manager father make him the underdog. Schwarzenegger fans who know him only from his "Conan" or "Terminator" days will understand Dana Carvey and Kevin Nealon's "Hans and Franz" routine when they hear him say that milk is for babies or proclaim that feeling pumped is like being in a constant ejaculatory state.—*M.S.* (BAM Rose Cinemas; June 8.)

RAISING VICTOR VARGAS

A lovely small-scale comedy about the commonplace mating rituals in a Dominican section of Manhattan. It's summer, and everyone is on the prowl, but the neighborhood is friendly and peaceful; chickens run through the alleys, and small gardens pop up here and there among the projects. The boys act cocky even when they're unsure of themselves, and the girls pretend they don't need boys. Nothing very important happens, but, moment by moment, the movie is alive with the play of gestures and glances, the faces of aggression and withdrawal. Victor Rasuk is well cast as the good-looking local Casanova, perhaps eighteen years old, and Judy Marte is the wary young beauty who gets him to change his style. The writer-director Peter Sollett stays close to the actors, all nonprofessionals, and they greet the camera with a modest but exploratory willingness.—*D.D.* (3/31/03) (Empire 25, Kew Gardens Cinema, Sunshine Cinema, and Sutton 1 and 2.)

SANS SOLEIL

"Sans Soleil" is one avant-garde film that is funny, scary, emotionally involving, and intellectually exhilarating. The auteur behind this poetic 1982 documentary collage is Chris Marker, the innovative Frenchman best known here for "La Jetée" and "The Koumiko Mystery." It's narrated by a fictional cinematographer named Sandor Krasna, who wanders through Africa and his favorite country, Japan, seeking out the root beliefs and rituals that might make it possible for people to feel part of a natural historical continuity, even in a technological age. Krasna has hatched a plot for a sci-fi movie: twenty centuries in the future, a man attempts to discover the meaning of Mussorgsky's "Sunless" song cycle, which still exists in his time but is no longer comprehensible. Like Krasna (and Krasna's hero), Marker is hardly obscure; he's trying to elucidate the cascade of crossed signals in our own time. A montage of Japanese rail travellers and the violent, sexy, silly cartoon and movie images that flit through their minds is the most clear-headed evocation you're likely to see of fragmented contemporary consciousness. In French.—*M.S.* (Anthology Film Archives; June 5 and June 7.)

THE SHAPE OF THINGS

The latest Neil LaBute exercise in scorn and betrayal, in which people who don't belong together in the first place tear each other apart. These quarrels are supposed to reveal the drives and jealousies beneath the surface of companionship, but the LaBute movies (including "In the Company of Men" and "Your Friends & Neighbors") are redolent of the kind of self-important Off Broadway play in which antagonism on the stage can charge up an audience. In this one, a graduate student in art, Evelyn (Rachel Weisz), a fire-breathing free spirit, unaccountably

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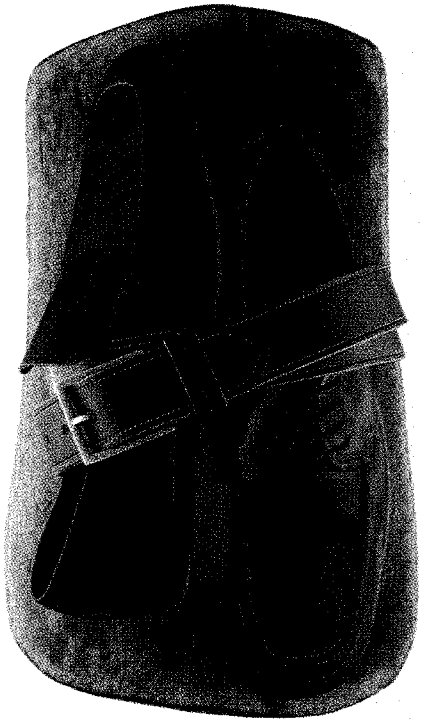

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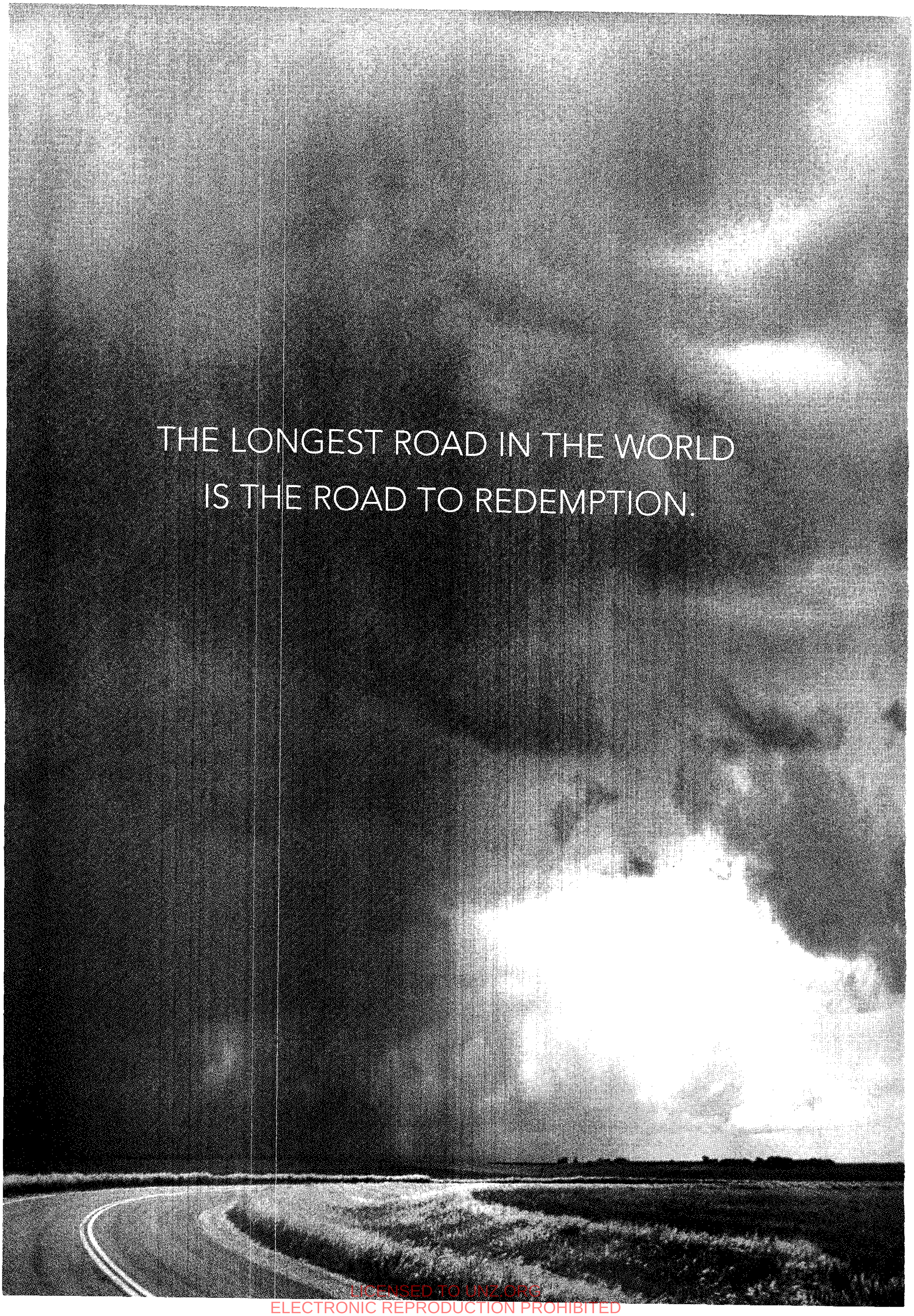
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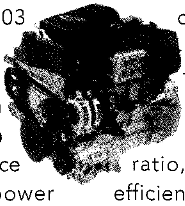

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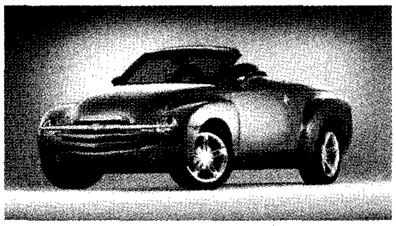

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takes up with an overweight and maladroit undergraduate, Adam (Paul Rudd). Evelyn reshapes Adam, changing his body, his hair, his walk, his nose, convincing him that he's attractive, and soon he *is* attractive, which causes a great deal of trouble between two undergraduate friends of Adam's (Frederick Weller and Gretchen Mol) who are about to get married. The movie, in the end, is about the misuse of sexual power and the cannibalizing nature of artists, but mostly it consists of endless, nagging dialogue scenes among remarkably dislikable people.—*D.D.* (5/19/03) (Kew Gardens Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)

SPELLBOUND
Jeffrey Blitz's charming documentary follows eight elementary students competing in the 1999 National Spelling Bee; he rode the bus to school with them, interviewed their teachers, checked out their rooms, and, in one case, listened while a kid talked like a robot. The sample of children is appropriately diverse—in region, in race, in the intensity of their preparations. Some of their parents see the spelling bee as representing the immigrant dream of America in miniature, while others seem amazed at the intensity of their nerdy offspring. The competitions are tense, and Blitz cobbles together a series of heartbreaking reaction shots of errant spellers. His direction shows a clever, occasionally flippant selection of detail—the dog-eared unabridged dictionaries, the congratulatory sign posted outside Hooters, the prodigy who signs his autographs "Trust in Jesus."—*M.A.* (Cinema 2 and Kew Gardens Cinema.)

WINGED MIGRATION
The French filmmaker Jacques Perrin shows us things we have never seen before: the alien world of insects in "Microcosmos" and, now, migrating birds in all their airborne glory. Perrin and his team of camera operators employ remote-control gliders and balloons to astonishing effect—the camera literally flies alongside the birds as they wing their way north and south in their search for food. They capture some amazing solo efforts, like the common murre who plunges off a ten-story seaside cliff, as well as the beauty of numbers, as in the scene of an entire flock of white-faced whistling ducks, all turning their heads at once. The images are mostly left alone, with minimal dialogue and endurable New Age music. Bird-lovers will be in heaven, and the less ornithologically inclined will be surprised to learn that some Canada geese don't hang around golf courses all winter. Among the more unforgettable birds on display is the Clark's grebe, which can pull off the cool trick of walking on water.—*M.A.* (Paris.)

X2
This is the sequel to "X-Men," Bryan Singer's sleek saga of extravagantly gifted humanoids known as mutants. Early grosses suggest that Singer has repeated his success, and that there may be further installments to come. But does the source material suit an extended franchise? The plotting seems dangerously self-interested, being concerned almost exclusively with the survival of the mutants themselves, and, behind the succulent effects, the tone is oddly hectoring, instructing us to behave liberally toward these nice boys and girls whose only quirk is the ability to create thunderstorms or hurl fire. Also, the need for fresh mutants will soon overcrowd the screen. Hugh Jackman, as Wolverine, is one of the few who emerge from the picture with their dignity enhanced; by contrast, Anna Paquin, Halle Berry, and even Ian McKellen are cruelly underused. With Alan Cumming, enjoying himself to a quite illicit degree as a Teutonic devil, and Brian Cox as a neo-con mutant-hunter, whose goatee may be the most villainous effect of all.—*A.L.* (5/12/03) (Battery Park 16, Chelsea West, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Metro Twin, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

ALSO PLAYING

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Angelika Film Center and Cinema 3.
THE ITALIAN JOB
Battery Park 16, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Twin,

19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East Cinemas, 34th Street Theatre, Village Theatre VII.

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THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 212-777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn.
Battery Park 16, West St. at Vesey St.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinemas 1, 2, and 3, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (212-924-3363).
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (212-398-3939).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Kew Gardens Cinema, 81-05 Lefferts Blvd., Queens (718-441-9835).
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (212-757-2280).
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New York Twin, Second Ave. at 66th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (212-688-3800).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (212-334-2100).
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
Sunshine Cinema, 139-143 E. Houston St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Theatre, 312 W. 34th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Through June 8: "Finding a Place: The Films of Ang Lee." June 7 at 2: "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" (2000; in Mandarin), followed by a discussion with Lee and the screenwriter James Schamus. ♦ June 8 at 1:30: "The Ice Storm" (1997). ♦ June 8 at 4: "Ride with the Devil" (1999). ♦ Repertory nights. June 7-8 at 6:30: "Weekend" (1967, Jean-Luc Godard; in French).

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5181)—A Chris Marker retrospective. All films are in French. June 4 at 7:30 and June 7 at 3:30: "A Grin Without a Cat" (1977-93). ♦ June 5 at 7 and 9:30 and June 7 at 9: "Sans Soleil" (†). ♦ June 6 at 7 and June 8 at 9: "The Last Bolshevik" (1993). ♦ June 6 at 9:30 and June 8 at 7: "One Day in the Life of Andrei Arsenevich" (1999). ♦ June 7 at 7 and June 8 at 5: Rare videos by Chris Marker.

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-777-3456)—Through June 30: "Village Voice: Best of 2002." June 4 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Imitation of Life" (1959, Douglas Sirk). ♦ June 5 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:30: "Horns and Halos" (2002, Suki Hawley and Michael Galinsky). ♦ June 6 at 2, 4:30, and 7: "Far from Heaven" (2002, Todd Haynes). ♦ June 7 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Hukkle" (2002, György Pálfi; in Hungarian). ♦ June 9 at 4:30 and 7:30: "Y Tu Mamá También" (2002, Alfonso Cuarón; in Spanish). ♦ June 10 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Morvern Callar" (2002, Lynne Ramsay). ♦ A one-day "Pumping Iron" festival. June 8 at 3 and 9: "Pumping Iron" (†). ♦ June 8 at 6: "Pumping Iron II" (1984, George Butler). An outdoor bodybuilding exhibition and an interview with the director will follow the 3 P.M. screening.

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—June 4-12 at 1:20, 4:40, and 8: "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly" (†).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL
55 E. 59th St. (212-315-6160)—Through June 24: Joan of Arc movies. June 10 at 12:30, 4, and 7:30: "Jeanne la Pucelle I. Les Batailles" (1994, Jacques Rivette; in French).

GRAMERCY THEATRE
127 E. 23rd St. (212-777-4900)—June 5-7: A retrospective of the documentaries of Nicolas Philibert. All films are in French. June 5 at 2 and June 7 at 6: "In the Land of the Death" (1992). ♦ June 5 at 4 and June 7 at 4: "Every Little Thing" (1996). ♦ June 5 at 6 and June 7 at 1: "Animals" (1994). ♦ June 5 at 7:30: "To Be and to Have" (2002). ♦ June 6 at 2: "Louvre City" (1990). ♦ Through June 12: The documentary films of Charlotte Zwerin. June 6 at 4 and June 8 at 4:30: "Thelonious Monk: Straight, No Chaser" (1989). ♦ June 6 at 6:15: An interview with Zwerin and a screening of a work in progress. ♦ June 6 at 8:30: "Gimme Shelter" (1970; with the Maysles brothers). ♦ June 7 at 8: "Salesman" (1969; with the Maysles brothers). ♦ June 8 at 2: "Ella Fitzgerald: Something to Live For" (1999). ♦ June 9 at 6: "Arshile Gorky" (1982). ♦ June 9 at 8: "De Kooning on De Kooning" (1981). ♦ Special event. June 8 at 7: Screenings of "The Hire" (2001-2002), eight short films featuring car chases that were produced by BMW.

SUNSHINE CINEMA
139-143 E. Houston St. (212-358-0573)—Midnight movies. June 6-7: "Superman: The Movie" (1978, Richard Donner).

THALIA THEATRE
Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—Through July 13: Sci-Fi Flick Fest. June 7 at 2 and June 8 at 6:30: "Barbarella" (1968, Roger Vadim). ♦ June 7 at 4 and June 8 at 8:15: "The Road Warrior" (1981, George Miller). ♦ June 7 at 6:30 and June 8 at 2: "The Time Machine" (1960, George Pal). ♦ June 7 at 8:30 and June 8 at 4: "Forbidden Planet" (†).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—Through June 12: "Open Roads: New Italian Cinema." All films are in Italian. June 5 at 1:30 and 6:30: "Il Mafioso" (1962, Alberto Lattuada). ♦ June 5 at 4 and June 8 at 8:30: "Outsiders of the Crowd" (2001, Vincenzo Marra). ♦ June 5 at 8:45: "Say It with My Words" (2003, Daniele Luchetti). ♦ June 6 at 1:30: "Happiness for Free" (2003, Mimmo Calopresti). ♦ June 6 at 4 and June 7 at 9:15: "Soul Mate" (2002, Sergio Rubini). ♦ June 6 at 6:30: "V-Max" (2002, Daniele Vicari). ♦ June 6 at 8:45, June 7 at 6:45, and June 9 at 2: "Two Friends" (2002, Sprio Scimone and Francesco Sframele). ♦ June 7 at 5, June 9 at 6:15, and June 10 at 1:30: "One More Hour with You" (2002, Alina Marrazzi). ♦ June 8 at 1 and June 10 at 8: "The Adventures of Pinocchio" (1971, Luigi Comencini). ♦ June 8 at 3:45: "Ultimo Stadio" (2002, Ivano de Matteo). ♦ June 8 at 6:15 and June 9 at 4 and 8: "Pater Familias" (2002, Francesco Patierno). ♦ June 10 at 3:45: "Casomai" (2002, Alessandro D'Alatri).

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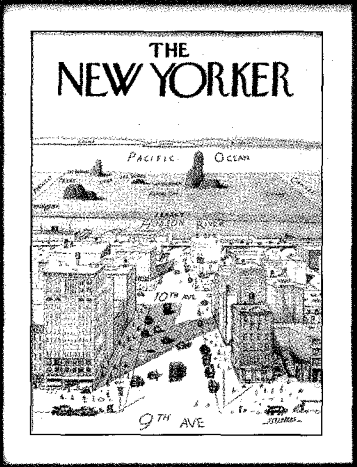

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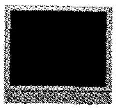

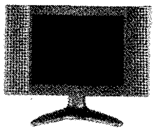

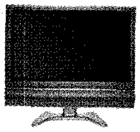

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THE NEW YORKER

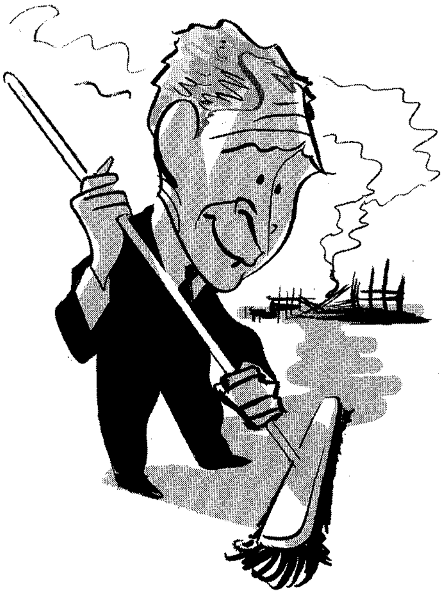
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
BUILDING NATIONS

The other day, the *Times* quoted one of that ever-helpful breed, a "senior administration official," as expressing surprise at the horrendous condition of Iraq's "infrastructure," even before the destruction brought about by the war and its aftermath. "From the outside it looked like Baghdad was a city that works," the senior official said. "It isn't."

The quintessential city that works (or, at least, has a cleverly cultivated reputation for being the city that works) is, of course, Chicago. The ward heelers and aldermen of that city understand (or, at least, are celebrated in song and story for understanding) that political power flows not from the barrel of a gun, and not even, necessarily, from the ballot box (whose contents can change in the counting), but from the ability to fix potholes. Garbage that gets collected, buses and trains that take people places, cops that whack bad guys upside the head, taps that yield water when you turn them, lights that go on when you flip the switch, all lubricated by taxes and a bit of honest graft—these are what keep streets calm, voters pacified, and righteous "reformers" out of City Hall.

By Chicago standards, Baghdad, along with almost all the rest of Iraq, is a catastrophe. For that matter, conditions are disastrous even by the looser standards of places like Beirut, Bogotá, and Bombay. Reports from the scene are in general agreement on the essentials. Iraq is well rid of the murderous regime of Saddam Hussein. But the blithe assumptions of the Iraq war's Pentagon architects—that a grateful Iraqi nation, with a little help from American know-how and Iraqi oil cash, would quickly pick itself up, dust itself off, and start all over again—are as shattered as the buildings that used to house Saddam's favorite restaurants. In Baghdad, and in many other Iraqi cities and towns, civic society has degenerated into a Hobbesian state of nature. Despite the heroic efforts of a scattered minority of midlevel Iraqi civil servants, the services that make urban life viable are functioning, at best, erratically. More often, they do not function at all. "In the most palpable of ways, the American promise of a new Iraq is floundering on the inability of the American occupiers to provide basic services," the *Times's* Neela Banerjee reported a few days ago. (Perhaps with an eye to educating her White House readers, she added that Baghdad is "about the size of metropolitan Houston.") Telephones are dead. Electricity and running water work, if at all, for only a few hours a day. Because the water pumps are hobbled by power outages, raw sewage is pouring into the Tigris River and is leaking into the fresh-water system, spreading disease and making the city stink. Hospitals that are secure enough to remain open overflow with patients, but they are short of food, medical supplies, and personnel. (Only a fifth of prewar health staffs are showing up for work.) Worst of all is the pervasive, well-founded fear of crime. Armed thugs rule the streets, especially in the pitch-black nights. "Amid such privations," Banerjee writes, "one of the few things that thrives now in Baghdad, at least, is a deepening distrust and anger toward the United States."



It's tempting to suggest that the Bush Administration is failing to provide Iraq with functioning, efficient, reliable public services because it doesn't *believe* in functioning, efficient, reliable public services—doesn't believe that they should exist, and doesn't really believe that they can exist. The reigning ideologues in Washington—not only in the White

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ERIC PALMA

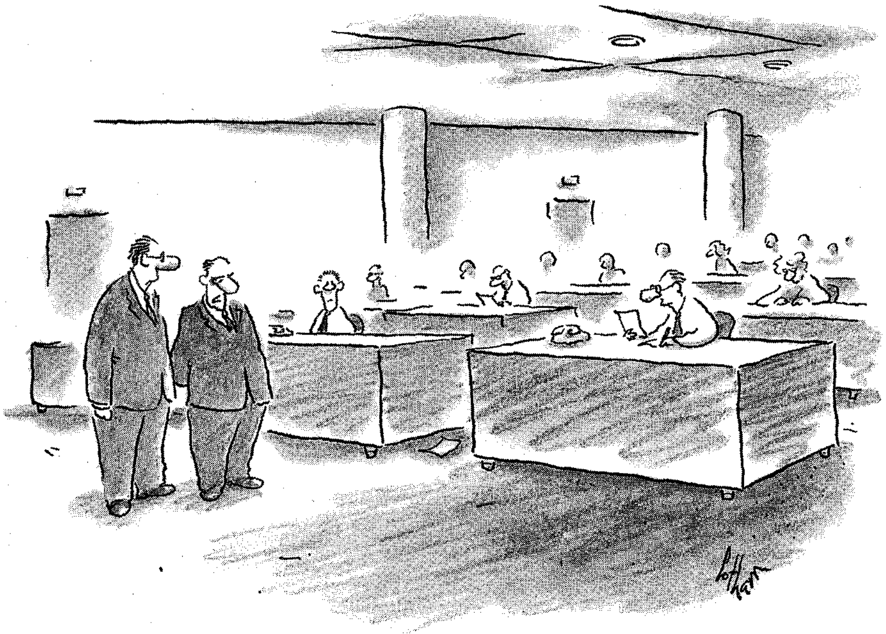
House but also in the Republican congressional leadership, in the faction that dominates the Supreme Court, and in the conservative press and think tanks—believe in free markets, individual initiative, and private schools and private charity as substitutes for public provision. They believe that the armed individual citizen is the ultimate guarantor of public safety. They do not, at bottom, believe that society, through the mechanisms of democratic government, has a moral obligation to provide care for the sick, food for the hungry, shelter for the homeless, and education for all; and to the extent that they tolerate such activities they do so grudgingly, out of political necessity. They believe that the private sector is sovereign, and that taxes are a species of theft. To paraphrase Proudhon, *les impôts, c'est le vol.*

In a way, Iraq has become a theme park of conservative policy nostrums. There are no burdensome government regulations. Health and safety inspectors and environmental busybodies are nowhere to be seen. The Ministry of Finance, Iraq's equivalent of the Internal Revenue Service, is a scorched ruin. Museums and other cultural institutions, having been largely emptied of their contents, no longer have much use for public subsidies. Gun control is being kept within reasonable limits. (Although the occupying authorities are trying to discourage possession of heavy munitions, AK-47s and other assault weapons—guns of the type whose manufacture Tom DeLay and most of the House Republicans plan to re-legalize back home—have been given a pass.) And, in the absence of welfare programs and other free-lunch giveaways, faith-based initiatives are flourishing. The faith in question may be Iranian-style militant Shiism, but at least it's fundamentalist.

The Bush Administration no longer flaunts its contempt for nation-building abroad, but it remains resolutely hostile to nation-building at home. Its domestic policy consists almost solely of a never-ending campaign to reduce the taxes of the very rich. Not all of this largesse will be paid for by loading debt onto future generations. Some of it is being paid for right now, by cuts in public services—cuts that outweigh the spare-change breaks for less affluent families which the Administration, in selling its successive tax elixirs, has had to include in order to suppress the electorate's gag reflex. The pain is especially acute at the state level, where net federal help is in decline. States are cancelling school construction, truncating the academic year, increasing class sizes, and eliminating preschool and after-school programs. Health benefits are being slashed, and a million people will likely lose coverage altogether. In many states, even cops are getting laid off.

As it happens, these are the very kinds of public services that America's proconsuls are promising to bring to Iraq. Of course, being nice to Iraq does not necessarily require the United States to be nice to itself. Nor does denying medicine to kids in Texas require denying it to kids in Baghdad. The connection is more karmic than causal. But it's also political. Whatever one may think of the global democratic-imperial ambitions of the present Administration, they cannot long coexist with the combination of narrow greed and public neglect it thinks sufficient for what it is pleased to call the homeland. At some point—the sooner the better—a critical mass of Americans will notice.

—*Hendrik Hertzberg*



"If one gets sick, we'll have to destroy the entire herd."

DEPT. OF SPORT FROM JERSEY

The Sports Hall of Fame of New Jersey occupies a hallway near the box office at Continental Airlines Arena, in the Meadowlands. It's basically a bunch of bronze plaques affixed to the walls. From a distance—say, from the ticket line, which almost never has enough buyers in it to account for the number of tickets available—the Hall of Fame seems little more than a gag, an instance of bumpkin boosterism. But on closer inspection it's an impressive shrine, rows of plaques depicting (with the usual varying degree of recognizability) not only the obvious Jersey heroes, such as the Giants' linebacker Lawrence Taylor and the Princeton basketball great Bill Bradley, but a roster of stars and what coaches call "character guys" who would match up well against any other state's. Among them are Vince Lombardi (Englewood), Jersey Joe Wolcott (Merchantville), Dick Button (Englewood), Paul Robeson (Somerville High), Alexander Wojciechowicz (South River High), Rosey Grier (Roselle High), Carl Lewis (Willingboro High), and, of course, Pelé (Três Corações). There are also plaques commemorating the first intercollegiate football game (Princeton-Rutgers, 1869) and the first game of baseball (Hoboken, 1846).

Not yet enshrined there, however, are

the purest representatives, nomenclature-wise, of the state's athletic aspirations: the 2003 New Jersey Devils (hockey) and the 2003 New Jersey Nets (hoops), the arena's tenants, who are both now in the final round of their respective championship tournaments. Rarely have two professional teams from the same arena and town (and East Rutherford is a town, with a mayor—and a population of less than half the arena's capacity) made it this deep in the same season; never before have both won. It looks as though the Devils, who were once derided by Wayne Gretzky as a "Mickey Mouse organization," are going to hold up their end of the deal in their series against a real Mickey Mouse organization, Disney's Mighty Ducks of Anaheim. The Nets, who will play the San Antonio Spurs, are underdogs, but they're scrappy and they haven't lost a game since April.

Traditionally, New Jersey troubadours—Roth, Sinatra, Springsteen, Piscopo—have celebrated the art of getting out. The state's defining cultural feature, fair or not, is the Turnpike, a means for passing through or moving on. But, in the Meadowlands right now, immigrants are having their day. None of the players on the Nets and the Devils are from Jersey, though many of them will one day make the wall of fame. Most of them embody qualities—grit, commitment, hustle—that are usually found in winners, and that are inevitably seen to be illustrative of the local character. Two of the most likely to wind up in bronze are the teams' most valuable players, the Nets' point guard Jason Kidd and the Devils' goalie Martin Brodeur, who are, respectively, selflessness and dependability incarnate. But what their conduct at the arena says about the average guy from Parsippany is complicated by their conduct at home. Two years ago, Kidd was charged with domestic abuse, and this season Brodeur had an affair with his sister-in-law. (Guess which one is getting a divorce?) At any rate, they haven't, as the saying goes, let it affect their game.

No matter how much the Jersey teams win (and the Devils, at least, have won a lot), Continental Airlines Arena will never be held in the same breathless regard as the two Gardens (Boston and Madison Square), and not just because the teams, willful but relatively anonymous, aren't likely to generate Celtics- or Knicks-calibre allegorizing. (What do the Devils and the Nets say about the way we live now? Who cares?) The arena, marooned in a parking-lot sea, is a charmless place, neither grand nor lovably shabby. It used to be dead; now, in this delirium of Jersey pride, it may be worse. At Devils games, the fans bang thunder sticks, the inflatable noisemakers introduced to this country by supporters of another Mickey Mouse organization, the Anaheim Angels. Imagine someone striking an empty oil drum with a ball-peen hammer. Imagine ten thousand people doing this, in an enclosed space. The Montreal Forum it ain't.

One of the members of the Sports Hall of Fame of New Jersey is the late football legend Angelo Bertelli, the "Springfield Rifle" (that would be Springfield, Massachusetts), who won the Heisman Trophy as a quarterback for Notre Dame in 1943. He moved to New Jersey in 1951 and opened a liquor-store chain in Clifton, a few miles from the future site of the arena. This, apparently, was enough to earn him a spot on the Jersey wall. His son Michael runs the business now and is a Devils and Nets fan, at least come playoff time. "Looking over the list of guys in the Hall of Fame, I was thinking, Holy cow, *this* guy was from Jersey?" he said last week. "It made me realize, Hey, it's possible for someone from Jersey to be somebody."

Jason Kidd

—*Nick Paumgarten*

HEY HO DEPT.
KRAZY

"Grand Wizzard Theodore was a guy up in the Bronx who was in his bedroom in 1975, playing around on his turntable, when his mother came in. Instead of hitting the start/stop button, he stopped it with his hand. He didn't want to hear what she had to say so he just kind of rubbed the record back and forth and created this scratching sound that drowned out whatever she was saying. And that was the invention of scratching."

Grandmaster Lester was a guy down in Lower Manhattan, who was playing around on his turntable the other day while listening to this lecture on the history of hip-hop. Lester and seventeen other members of his crew—the Krazy Klub, from Wantagh, Long Island—were gathered at the Scratch DJ Academy, the "world's only fully functioning DJ school with a copyrighted curriculum," for a lesson in scratching records. They ranged in age from sixty-nine to eighty-six, and in hair color from dyed-red to white.

Scratch Academy, which was founded last year by a group that included the late Jam Master Jay, of Run-DMC, and Reg E. Gaines, the author of "Bring In 'Da Noise, Bring In 'Da Funk," offers courses such as DJ101, DJ151, DJ303, and DJ Intensive; among its faculty are Mista Sinista, DJ Evil Dee, and Daddy Dog. Lester's class—call it DJ101 (Geezer Edition)—was taught by I. Emerge, or Merge, the reigning ITF World Scratch champion.

At the beginning of the class, the school's director of operations said, "We promise we'll keep the volume up or down as you need it."

"What did he say?" Lester asked, from the back of the room.

"We're not deaf," a woman shouted.

First came a brief lesson in hip-hop history—from spoken-word "toasting" in Jamaica during the nineteen-fifties and sixties ("At a party or a special occasion, someone would make a toast and the music would still be playing in the background"), to Grand Wizzard's Bronx bedroom, and on through Funkmaster Flex and Chuck Chillout.

"What about William B. Williams?" a wiseacre called out.

"You ever hear of Jonathan Schwartz?" said another. "How about QXR?"

The Krazy Klub, now in its forty-second year of existence, was formed by thirty friends who originally belonged to the Suburban Temple, in Wantagh, and who shared an interest in getting together several times a year for peculiar group activities (treasure hunt on the South Shore, private party on the 7 train, naked body painting). Attrition via death and moving has dwindled their ranks to eighteen. Scratch lessons were the idea of a member, Dave, who could no longer remember how he'd heard of them.

Merge introduced the aspiring d.j.s to their instruments—turntables and a mixer. He identified the cross fader, two "up faders," and the pitch slide. "If one record is slower than the other, we use the pitch slide to speed up that record so they both match," he said. "You don't want to stop the party—you want to go right into the next song, so you queue up the other record until it sounds exactly like the first record, the same beat. And then the people just keep dancing."

One student—it was Dave—groaned. "That's when you want to sit down and they won't stop playing music," he said. "It's endless."

"Can I use that pitch slide to understand someone talking hip-hop?" Lester asked. "They talk so fast. Can I use it to slow them down?"

Merge moved the lesson along quickly. He queued up a beat and set the turntables spinning—loud bass line, heavy snare drum. Several of the women covered their ears. He proceeded to demonstrate three types of scratches—the baby, the drag, and the scribble—and circled the room to conduct private tutorials, stopping occasionally to remind everyone that the proper scratching motion originates in the arm, not the hand.

"Now we're going to take it one step further: fader incorporation," Merge said. He described the proper technique: place one hand on the cross fader, one on the record; move the fader toward the turntable while scratching, and back away again.

Lester embraced the challenge. He bent close over the turntable, as though straining to hear. He began moving his hands—slowly at first, then faster—and as he did so he opened and closed his mouth, mimicking the scratching sound. He kept pace, more or less, with the beat. When he finished, Merge threw his hands over his head. "We have officially dubbed Lester a Grandmaster!" Merge said. "He is now Grandmaster Lester."

The senior scratchers threw their arms in the air and began raising the roof.

—*Ben McGrath*

THE BIZ
ALL THAT

The other night, several generations of show-biz people gathered to celebrate the actress Betsy Blair's new book, "The Memory of All That," a glamorous, name-filled memoir about her career, in the mid-twentieth century, on Broadway and in Hollywood, and about her marriage, at the age of seventeen, to Gene Kelly. The party was the first given at home on the Upper West Side by Phyllis Newman since the death, last October, of her husband, Adolph Green.

It was cozy in the apartment, with Blair, in a green raw-silk high-necked dress, looking and sounding not too different from the lonely, dateless girl she played in the 1955 movie "Marty." A young man at the Steinway played a few bars of "Body and Soul," and Blair gamely sang, "I'd gladly surrender myself to you, body and soul," then stopped and smiled quietly when nobody else joined her around the piano.

Guests arrived in batches, drank champagne, and ate little ham-and-cheese sandwiches and crab cakes. Blair exchanged hugs with all the old friends: Boaty Boatwright, Sidney Lumet, Meryl Streep, Lauren Bacall.

Mike Nichols hugged Blair and said, "Your book is remarkable. It's the only honest memoir I've ever read. You don't kiss up to anybody in it."

"How could I have left Gene, this wonderful man, after sixteen years of marriage?" Blair said cheerfully. "This perfect husband, father, friend, protector, provider, hard worker. I loved and admired him as a brilliant actor and dancer as well as a good, good man! To this day, I can't explain it." She went on, "It had nothing to do with sex. It was freedom. The word my grandchildren use to describe it is 'cool.' " She laughed.

At the age of thirty-six, she moved to London and soon married the director Karel Reisz, who died last November. " 'My second and eternal husband,' I call Karel in the book," Blair said. "I knew I'd always be interested in him, always intrigued by him."

Phyllis Newman put an arm around her daughter, Amanda Green, and introduced Green's husband, Dr. Jef Kaplan. "He's an orthopedic surgeon. Isn't that great—just in time, for all of us!" Newman said.

Will Frears, a twenty-nine-year-old theatre director with spiked hair—he was wearing white canvas sneakers and brown cords—arrived with a pretty twenty-four-year-old date, Chai Vasarhelyi, and introduced her to Blair.

"Chai just won the Tribeca Film Festival Award for Best Documentary, for 'A Normal Life,' about young people in Kosovo," he said, snatching a handful of crab cakes from a passing tray. "We're making dinner with these," he said shyly.

Frears and Vasarhelyi were introduced to Mike Nichols, who was impressed to hear Frears say that he had "half a novel in my computer" and was about to direct five new productions. He told Frears to call his assistant, and they would have lunch. Then Nichols talked to Vasarhelyi about finding a distributor for her documentary. "I told her to treat the applicants the way she would treat a boy asking her for a date," he said. "I told her to be elusive, not to return the calls, not to be easily accessible."

Lauren Bacall told Vasarhelyi, "You've done this at twenty-four, you could rule the world."

Frears ate a couple more of the hors d'oeuvres, and then he gave a carefree smooch to Betsy Blair. "We'd better hurry if we're going to make it to the theatre," he said. He and Vasarhelyi made their way to the door. Guests looked wistfully after them.

Bacall said she was leaving early, too, because the Arthur Schlesingers were giving her a ride home.

"That's very important now," she said lightly.

—*Lillian Ross*

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SAAB

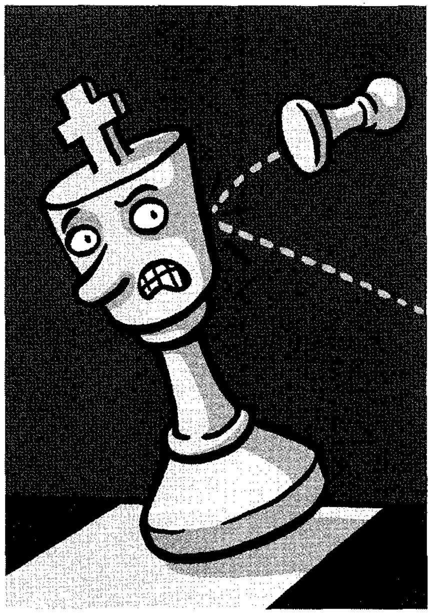
THE FINANCIAL PAGE
TO THE BARRICADES

In the 1956 comedy "The Solid Gold Cadillac," Judy Holliday plays Laura Partridge, a small investor in the giant conglomerate International Projects who shows up at all of the shareholder meetings to badger executives about their bloated salaries. Weary of her griping, the executives put her on the company payroll, as its first-ever director of investor relations. Eventually, Partridge wises up and uses her new position to organize a shareholder revolt that topples the corrupt C.E.O. and his cronies.

Shareholder meetings are full of would-be Laura Partridges these days. Some of them are old-school: notorious pests like Evelyn Y. Davis, the seventy-three-year-old woman who has been tormenting C.E.O.s for decades, and Nick Rossi, the hardware-store owner who was escorted out of Safeway's annual meeting last year after he threw a crumpled-up program at the company's general counsel. (Once Rossi was removed, the general counsel implored "Miss Davis" to be quiet, too. "It's *Mrs.* Davis," she replied. "I've had three husbands.") But shareholder activism has now gone mainstream: more than a thousand shareholder resolutions have been filed this year (up thirty per cent from last year), most of them attempts to reform the way executives get paid or the way a company is run. In the past, such resolutions were voted down, but this year dozens have been approved. At Avon, investors voted to force the company's board of directors to be reelected annually. At Delta Air Lines and Kimberly-Clark, they voted to have the companies treat stock options as an expense. And at Hewlett-Packard and Verizon they voted to curb golden parachutes.

The boom in shareholder activism is a response, of course, to the recent corporate scandals and the bursting of the stock-market bubble. During the bull market, investors got lazy, leaving shareholder-rights advocacy to the gadflies and the geeks. What point was there in worrying about such numbing matters as staggered boards and cumulative voting when everyone was getting rich? The disasters at Enron and Tyco changed all that, and it has become fashionable again to question the judgment of the C.E.O., especially when the issue is how much the C.E.O. ought to be paid.

It's one thing to raise questions, and another to get results. "The Solid Gold Cadillac" is a nice fairy tale, but in the real world the American system is not very friendly to shareholders. All the proposals that shareholders "adopted" this spring, for instance, are nonbinding. Companies are free to ignore them. Shareholders in Apple Computer voted in April for a resolution requiring the company to expense stock options. Last month, Apple announced that it would not do so, though it did state, graciously, that it "appreciates and takes seriously the views expressed by . . . shareholders."



American corporations get away with this disregard because of the way corporate governance works. Investors control the corporation not by themselves but through the board of directors, which they elect. In principle, that's reasonable; it's how the federal government works. But a healthy republic requires free elections, and corporations don't have those. In most company elections, directors run unopposed. The only way to replace them is to mount a costly proxy fight—at the challenger's expense. And even then, unless all the directors are up for reëlection in the same year, it's impossible to boot a negligent board. The typical American corporation is a shareholders' republic in the same way that China is a people's republic.

Economists have traditionally suggested that unhappy shareholders shouldn't worry about changing a company. Instead, they should take the Wall Street Walk and sell their shares. In other words, love it or leave it. That may have been good advice when shareholders were mainly small and dispersed, but it makes no sense now that at least half the stock in most companies is controlled by institutional investors, which have the financial incentive and the wherewithal to make companies get better. At the same time, big shareholders can't dump their shares without decimating the value of the stock. And they shouldn't have to. What if you believe in Apple's business prospects, but you also think that Apple might improve them slightly by expensing stock options?

It turns out that companies that give their shareholders authority tend to outperform those that don't. A recent survey of fifteen hundred companies, by the economists Paul Gompers, Joy Ishii, and Andrew Metrick, found that firms with stronger shareholder rights had faster sales growth, higher profits, and better stock returns than those that shut investors out. C.E.O.s and corporate boards do respond to moral suasion and bad publicity, even in the absence of legal consequences. (Nell Minow, the doyenne of shareholder activism, likes to say that boards of directors are like subatomic particles: they behave differently when they are being observed.) But everyone would be better off if shareholders could rely less on public agitation and more on real power.

As it happens, they may soon have some. The new S.E.C. chairman, William Donaldson, is considering radical revisions to the way shareholder proposals work and the way boards of directors are elected. The most important change would give substantial shareholders the right to nominate their own candidates to the board, which would ultimately make it harder for slothful or self-dealing executives to stack their boards with enablers and yes-men. American companies are the most productive and inventive in the world, but a little adult supervision wouldn't hurt. Laura Partridge had it right half a century ago: "Somebody's gotta keep an eye on these big geniuses."

—*James Surowiecki*

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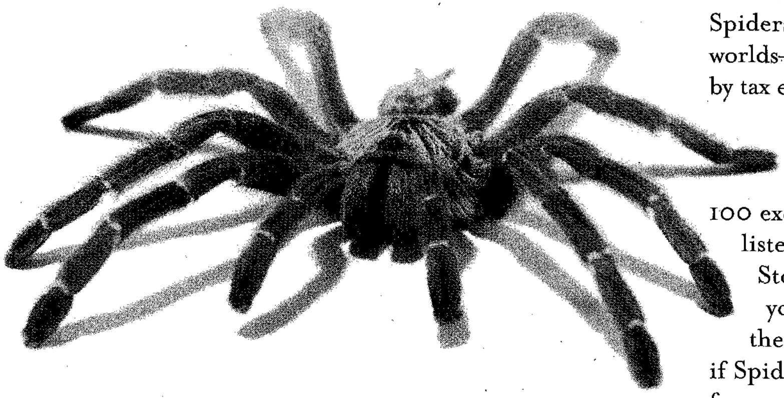

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POPULAR CHRONICLES

LIFELIKE

What it takes to be a great taxidermist.

BY SUSAN ORLEAN

As soon as the 2003 World Taxidermy Championships opened, the heads came rolling in the door. There were foxes and moose and freeze-dried wild turkeys; mallards and buffalo and chipmunks and wolves; weasels and buffleheads and bobcats and jackdaws; big fish and little fish and razor-backed boar. The deer came in herds, in carloads, and on pallets: dozens and dozens of whitetail and roe; half-deer and whole deer and deer with deformities, sneezing and glowering and nuzzling and yawning; does chewing apples and bucks nibbling leaves. There were millions of eyes, boxes and bowls of them; some as small as a lentil and some as big as a poached egg. There were animal mannequins, blank-faced and brooding, earless and eyeless and utterly bald: ghostly gray duikers and spectral pine martens and black-bellied tree ducks from some other world. An entire exhibit hall was filled with equipment, all the gear required to bring something dead back to life: replacement noses for grizzlies, false teeth for beavers, fish-fin cream, casting clay, upholstery nails.

The championships were held in April at the Springfield, Illinois, Crowne Plaza hotel, the sort of nicely appointed place that seems more suited to regional sales conferences and rehearsal dinners than to having wolves in the corridors and people crossing the lobby shouting, "Heads up! Buffalo coming through!" A thousand taxidermists converged on Springfield to have their best pieces judged and to attend such seminars as "Mounting Flying Waterfowl," "Whitetail Deer—From a Master!," and "Using a Fleshing Machine." In the Crowne Plaza lobby, across from the concierge desk, a grooming area had been set up. The taxidermists were bent over their animals, holding flashlights to check problem areas like tear ducts and nostrils, and wielding toothbrushes to tidy flyaway fur. People milled around, greeting fellow-taxidermists they hadn't seen since the last world championships, held in Springfield two years ago, and talking shop:

"Acetone rubbed on a squirrel tail will fluff it right back up."

"My feeling is that it's quite tough to do a good tongue."

"The toes on a real competitive piece are very important. I think Bondo works nicely, and so does Super Glue."

"I knew a fellow with cattle, and I told him, 'If you ever have one stillborn, I'd really like to have it.' I thought it would make a really nice mount."

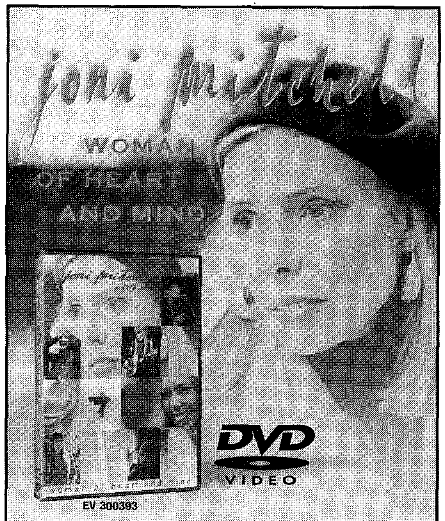
Ribbon-winning mounts from the 2003 world championships, in Springfield, Illinois. Photograph by Sylvia Plachy.

That there is a taxidermy championship at all is something of an astonishment, not only to the people in the world who have no use for a Dan-D-Noser and Soft Touch Duck Degreaser but also to taxidermists themselves. For a long time, taxidermists kept their own counsel. Taxidermy, the three-dimensional representation of animals for permanent display, has been around since the eighteenth century, but it was first brought into popular regard by the Victorians, who thrilled to all tokens of exotic travel and especially to any domesticated representations of wilderness—the glassed-in miniature rain forest on the tea table, the mounted antelope by the front door. The original taxidermists were upholsterers who tanned the hides of hunting trophies and then plumped them up with rags and cotton, so that they reassumed their original shape and size; those early poses were stiff and simple, and the expressions fairly expressionless. The practice grew popular in this country, too: by 1882, there was a Society of American Taxidermists, which held annual meetings and published scholarly reports, especially on the matter of preparing animals for museum display. As long as taxidermy served to preserve wild animals and make them available for study, it was viewed as an honorable trade, but most people were still discomfited by it. How could you not be? It was the business of dealing with dead things, coupled with the questionable enterprise of making dead things look like live things. In spite of its scientific value, it was usually regarded as almost a black art, a wholly owned subsidiary of witchcraft and voodoo. By the early part of the twentieth century, taxidermists such as Carl E. Akeley, William T. Horneday, and Leon Pray had refined techniques and begun emphasizing artistry. But, the more the techniques of taxidermy improved, the more it discomfited: instead of the lumpy moose head that was so artless that it looked fake, there were mounts of pouncing bobcats so immaculately and exactly preserved they made you flinch.

For the next several decades, taxidermy existed in the margins—a few practitioners here and there, often self-taught, and usually known only by word of mouth. Then, in the late nineteen-sixties, a sort of transformation began: the business started to seem cleaner and less creepy—or maybe, in that messy, morbid time, popular culture started to again appreciate the messy, morbid business of mounting animals for display. An ironic reinterpretation of cluttered, bourgeois Victoriana and its strained juxtapositions of the natural and the man-made was in full revival—what hippie outpost didn't have a stuffed owl or a moose head draped with a silk shawl?—so, once again, taxidermy found a place in the public eye. Supply houses concocted new solvents and better tanning compounds, came out with lightweight mannequins, produced modern formulations of resins and clays. Taxidermy schools opened; previously, any aspiring taxidermist could only hope to learn the trade by apprenticing or by taking one of a few correspondence courses available. In 1971, the National Taxidermy Association was formed (the old society had moldered long before). In 1974, a trade magazine called *Taxidermy Review* began sponsoring national competitions. For the first time, most taxidermists had a chance to meet one another and share advice on how to glue tongues into jaw sets or accurately measure the carcass of a squirrel.

The competitions were also the first time that taxidermists could compare their skills and see who in the business could sculpt the best moose septum or could most perfectly capture the look on a prowling coyote's face. Taxidermic skill is a function of how deft you are at skinning an animal and then stretching its hide over a mannequin and sewing it into place. Top-of-the-line taxidermists sculpt their own mannequins; otherwise they will buy a ready-made polyurethane-foam form and tailor the skin to fit. Body parts that can't be preserved (ears, eyes, noses, lips, tongues) can be either store-bought or handmade. How good the mount looks—that is, how alive it looks—is a function of how assiduously the taxidermist has studied reference material (photographs, drawings, and actual live animals) so that he or she knows the particular creature literally and figuratively inside out.

To be good at taxidermy, you have to be good at sewing, sculpting, painting, and hairdressing, and mostly you have to be a little bit of a zoology nerd. You have to love animals—love looking at them, taking photographs of them, hunting them, measuring them, casting them in plaster of Paris when they're dead so that you have a reference when you're, say, attaching ears or lips and want to get the angle and shape exactly right. Some taxidermists raise the animals they most often mount, so they can just step out in the back yard when they're trying to remember exactly how a deer looks when it's licking its nose, especially because modern taxidermy emphasizes mounts with interesting expressions, rather than the stunned-looking creations of the past. Taxidermists seem



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to make little distinction between loving animals that are alive and loving ones that are not. "I love deer," one of the champions in the whitetail division said to me. "They're my babies."

Taxidermy is now estimated to be a five-hundred-and-seventy-million-dollar annual business, made up of small operators around the country who mount animals for museums, for decorators, and mostly for the thirteen million or so Americans who are recreational hunters and on occasion want to preserve and display something they killed and who are willing to shell out anywhere from two hundred dollars to mount a pheasant to several thousand for a kudu or a grizzly bear. There are state and regional taxidermy competitions throughout the year and the world championships, which are held every other year; two trade magazines; a score of taxidermy schools; and three thousand visits to Taxidermy.net every day, where taxidermists can trade information and goods with as little self-consciousness as you would find on a knitting Web site:

"I am in need of several pair of frozen goat feet!"

"Hi! I have up to 300 sets of goat feet and up to 1000 set of sheep feet per month. Drop me an email at frozencritters.com . . . . or give me a call and we can discuss your needs."

"I have a very nice small raccoon that is frozen whole. I forgot he was in the freezer. Without taking exact measurements I would guess he is about twelve inches or so—very cute little one. Will make a very nice mount."

"Can I rinse a boar hide good and freeze it?"

"Bob, if it's salted, don't worry about it!"

"Can someone please tell me the proper way to preserve turkey legs and spurs? Thanks!"

"Brian, I inject the feet with Preservz-It . . . . Enjoy!"

The word in the grooming area was that the piece to beat was Chris Krueger's happy-looking otters swimming in a perpetual circle around a leopard frog. A posting on Taxidermy.net earlier in the week declared, "EVERYTHING about this mount KICKS BUTT!!" Kicking butt, in this era of taxidermy, requires having a mount that is not just lifelike but also artistic. It used to be enough to do what taxidermists call "fish on a stick" displays; now a serious competitor worries about things like flow and negative space and originality. One of this year's contenders, for instance, Ken Walker's giant panda, had artistry and accuracy going for it, along with the element of surprise. The thing looked a hundred per cent pure panda, but you can't go out and shoot a panda, and you aren't likely to get hold of a panda that has met a natural end, so everyone was dying to know how he had done it. The day the show opened, Walker was in the grooming area, gluing bamboo into place behind the animal's back paws, and a crowd had gathered around him. Walker works as a staff taxidermist for the Smithsonian. He is a breezy, shaggy-haired guy whose hands are always busy. One day, I saw him holding a piece of clay while waiting for a seminar to begin, and within thirty seconds or so, without actually paying much attention to it, he had molded the clay into a little minklike creature.

"The panda was actually pretty easy," he was saying. "I just took two black bears and bleached one of them—I think I used Clairol Basic. Then I sewed the two skins together into a panda pattern." He took out a toothbrush and fluffed the fur on the panda's face. "At the world championship two years ago, a guy came in with an extinct Labrador duck. I was in awe. I thought, What could beat that—an extinct duck? And I came up with this idea." He said he thought that the panda would get points for creativity alone. "You can score a ninety-eight with a squirrel, but it's still a squirrel," he said. "So that means I'm going with a panda."

"What did you do for toenails, Ken?" someone asked.

"I left the black bear's toenails in," he said. "They looked pretty good."

Another passerby stopped to admire the panda. He was carrying a grooming kit, which appeared to contain Elmer's glue, brown and black paint, a small tool set, and a bottle of Suave mousse. "I killed a blond bear once," he said to Ken. "A two-hundred-pound sow. Whew, she made a beautiful mount."

"I'll bet," Ken said. He stepped back to admire the panda. "I like doing re-creations of these endangered animals and extinct animals, since that's the only way anyone's going to have one. Two years ago, I did a sabre-toothed cat. I got an old lioness from a zoo and bleached her."

The panda was entered in the Re-Creation (Mammal) division, one of the dozens of divisions and subdivisions and sub-subcategories, ranging from the super-specific (Whitetail Deer Long Hair, Open Mouth Division) to the

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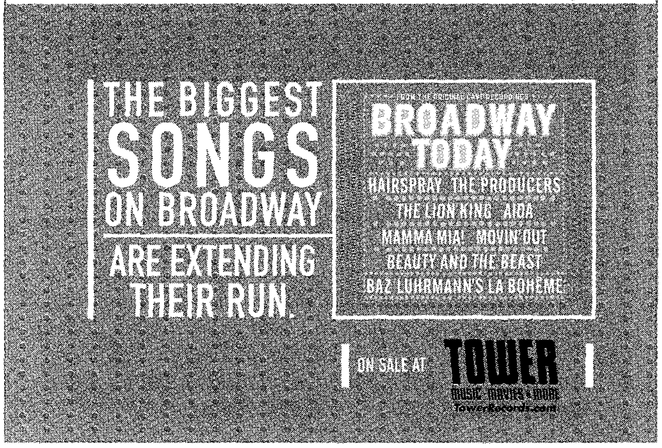
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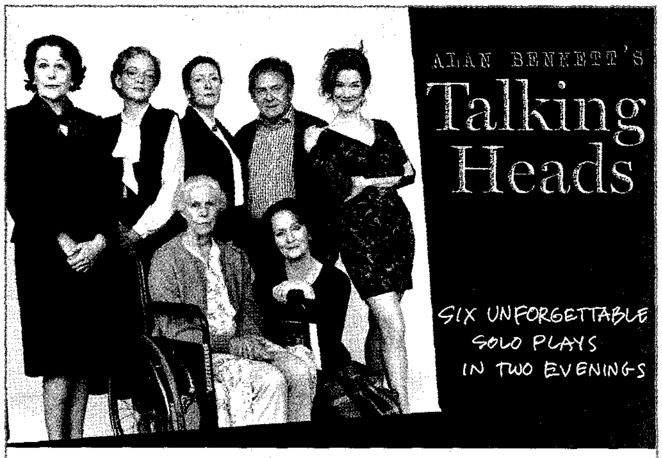
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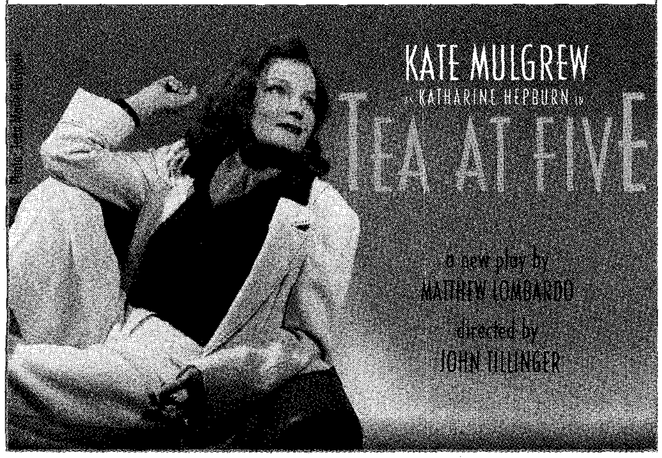
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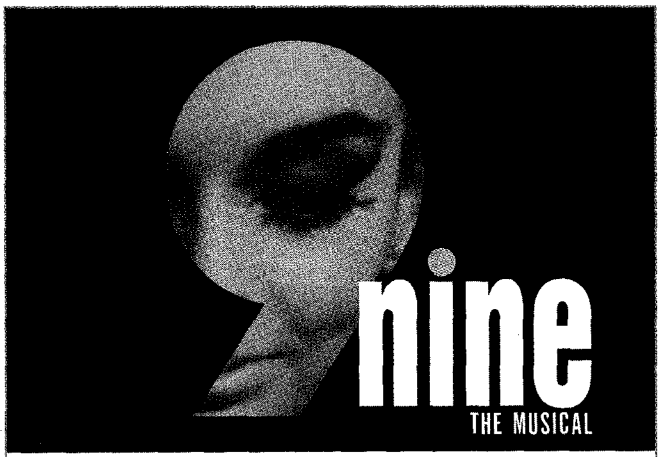

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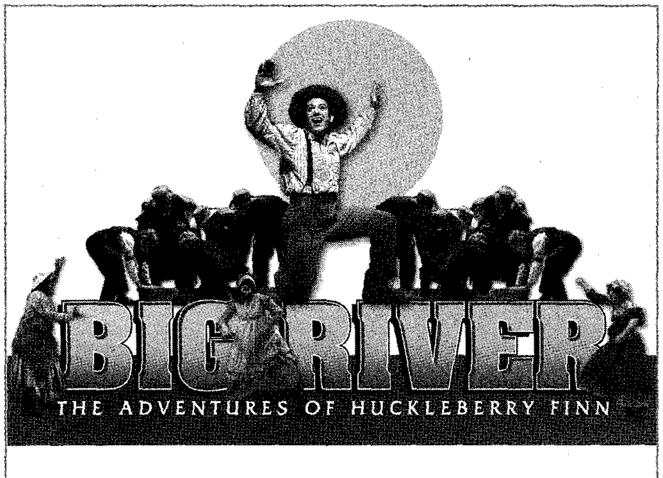
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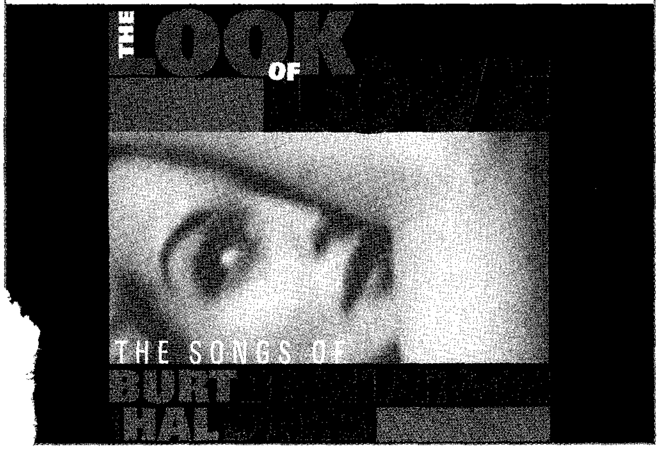

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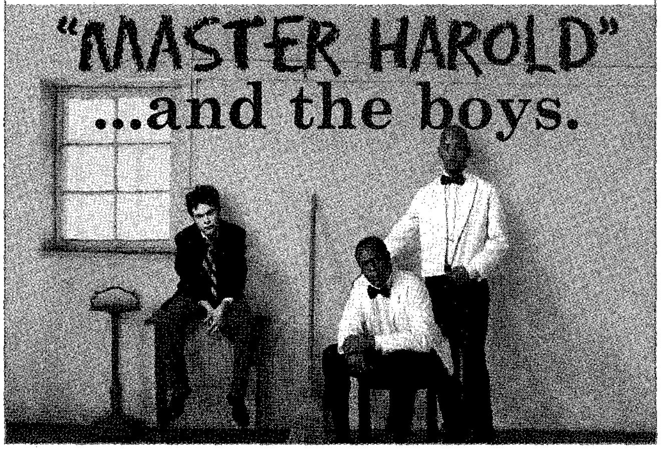

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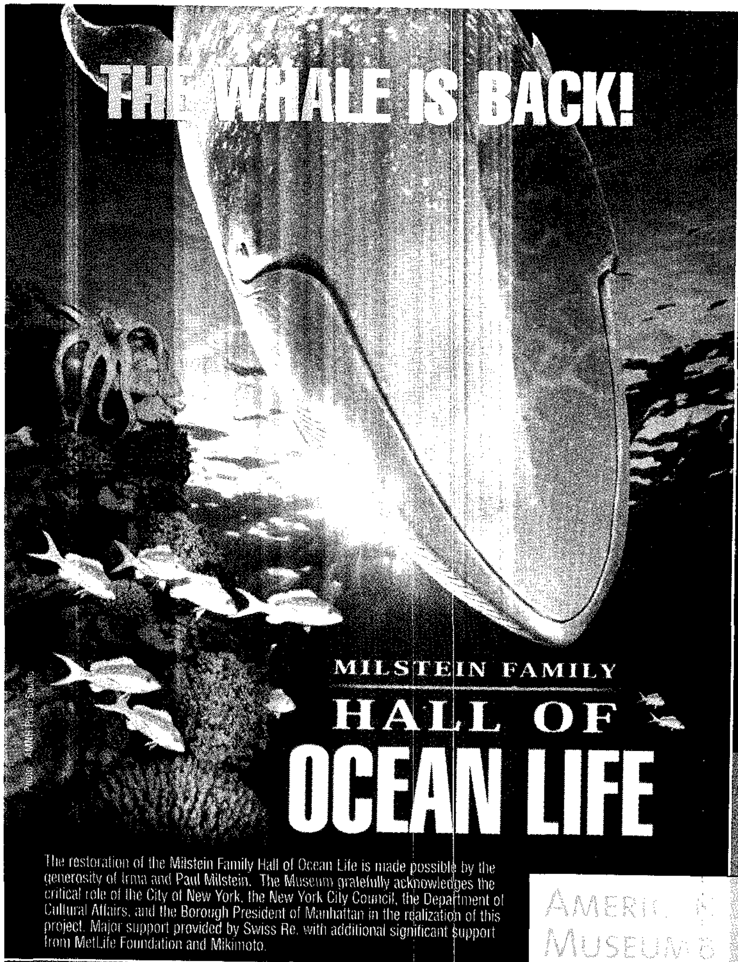

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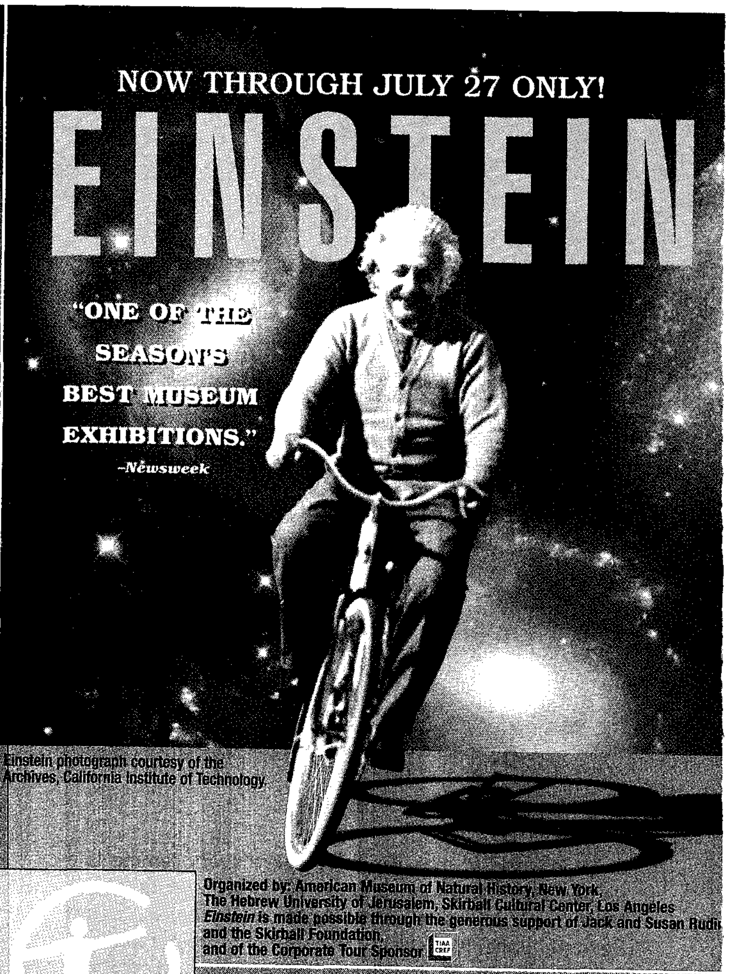

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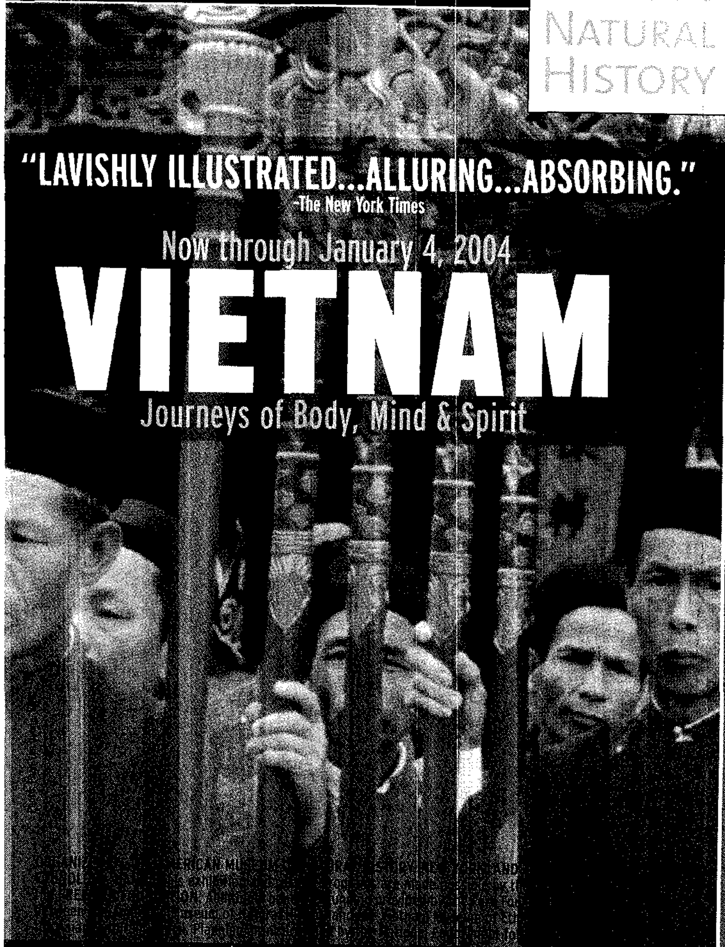

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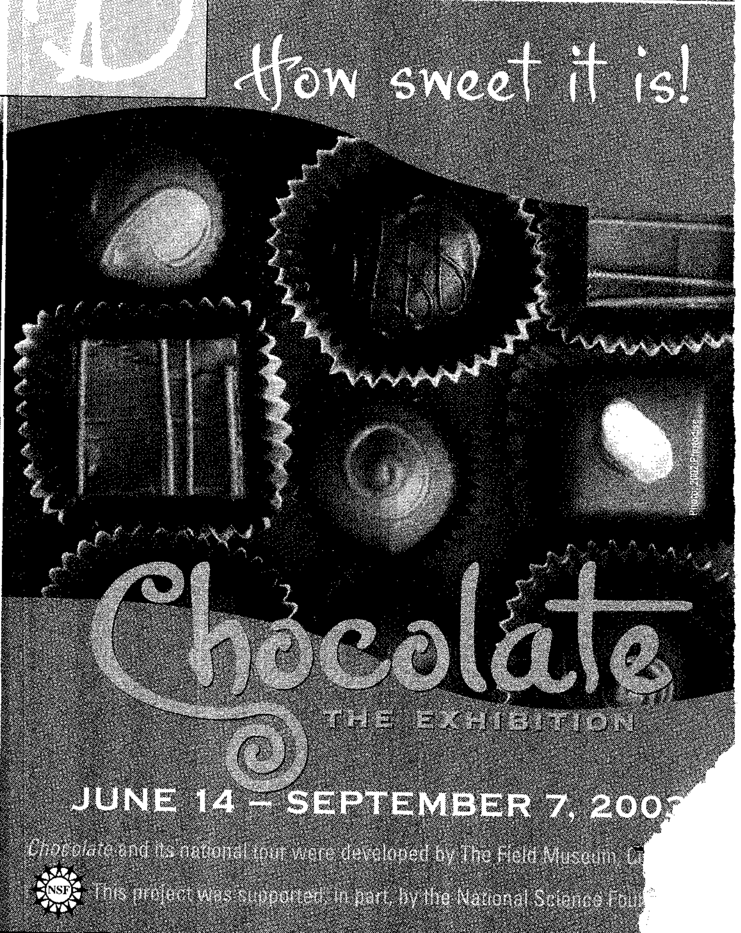

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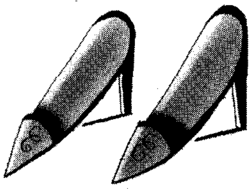
sweepingly colossal (Best in World), that would share in twenty-five thousand dollars' worth of prizes. (There is even a sub-sub-subspecialty known as "fish carving," which uses no natural fish parts at all; it is resin and wood sculpted into a fish form and then painted.) Nearly all the competitors are professionals, and they publicize their awards wherever possible. For instance, instead of ordering just any Boar Eye-Setting Reference Head out of a taxidermy catalogue, you can order the Noonkester's #NRB-ERH head sculpted by Bones Johnson, which was, as the catalogue notes, the 2000 National Taxidermy Association Champion Gamehead.

The taxidermists take the competition very seriously. During the time I was in Springfield, I heard conversations analyzing such arcane subjects as exactly how much a javelina's snout wrinkles when it snarls and which molars deer use to chew acorns as opposed to which ones they use to chew leaves. This is important because the ultimate goal of a taxidermist is to make the animal look exactly as if it had never died, as if it were still in the middle of doing ordinary animal things like plucking berries off a bush or taking a nap. When I walked around with the judges one morning, I heard discussions that were practically Talmudic, about whether the eyelids on a bison mount were overdetailed, and whether the nostrils on a springbok were too wide, and whether the placement of whiskers on an otter appeared too deliberate. "You do get compulsive," a taxidermist in the exhibit hall explained to me one afternoon. At the time, he was running a feather duster over his entry—a bobcat hanging off an icicle-covered rock—in the last moments before the judging would begin. "When you're working on a piece, you forget to eat, you forget to drink, you even forget to sleep. You get up in the middle of the night and go into the shop so you can keep working. You get completely caught up in it. You want it to be perfect. You're trying to make something come back to life."



I said that his bobcat was beautiful, and that even the icicles on the piece looked completely real. "I made them myself," he said. "I used clear acrylic toilet-plunger handles. The good Lord sent the idea to me while I was in a hardware store. I just took the handles and put them in the oven at four hundred degrees." He tapped the icicles and then added, "My wife was pretty worried, but I did it on a nonstick cookie sheet."

So who wants to be a taxidermist? "I was a meat cutter for fifteen years," a taxidermist from Kentucky said to me. "That whole time, no one ever said to me, 'Boy, that was a wonderful steak you cut me.' Now I get told all the time what a great job I've done." Steve Faechner, who is the president and chairman of the Academy of Realistic Taxidermy, in Havre, Montana, started mounting animals in 1989, after years spent working on the railroad. "I had gotten hurt, and was looking for something to do," he said. "I was with a friend who did taxidermy and I thought to myself, I have got to get a life. And this was it." Larry Blomquist, who is the owner of the World Taxidermy Championships and of *Breakthrough*, the trade magazine that sponsors the competition, was a schoolteacher for three years before setting up his business. There are a number of women taxidermists (one was teaching this year's seminar on Problem Areas in Mammal Taxidermy), and there are budding junior taxidermists, who had their own competition division, for kids fourteen and younger, at the show.

The night the show opened, I went to dinner with three taxidermists who had driven in from Kentucky, Michigan, and Maryland. They were all married, and all had wives who complained when they found one too many antelope carcasses in the family freezer, and all worked full time mounting animals—mostly deer, for local hunters, but occasional safari work, for people who had shot something in Africa. When I mentioned that I had no idea that a person could make a living as a taxidermist, they burst out laughing, and the guy from Kentucky pointed out that he lived in a little town and there were two other full-time taxidermists in business right down the road.

"What's the big buzz this year?" the man from Michigan asked.

"I don't know. Probably something new with eyes," the guy from Maryland

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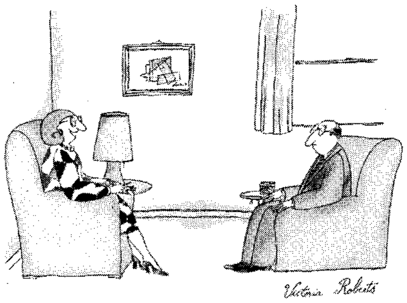

"Don't worry, Howard. The big questions are multiple choice."

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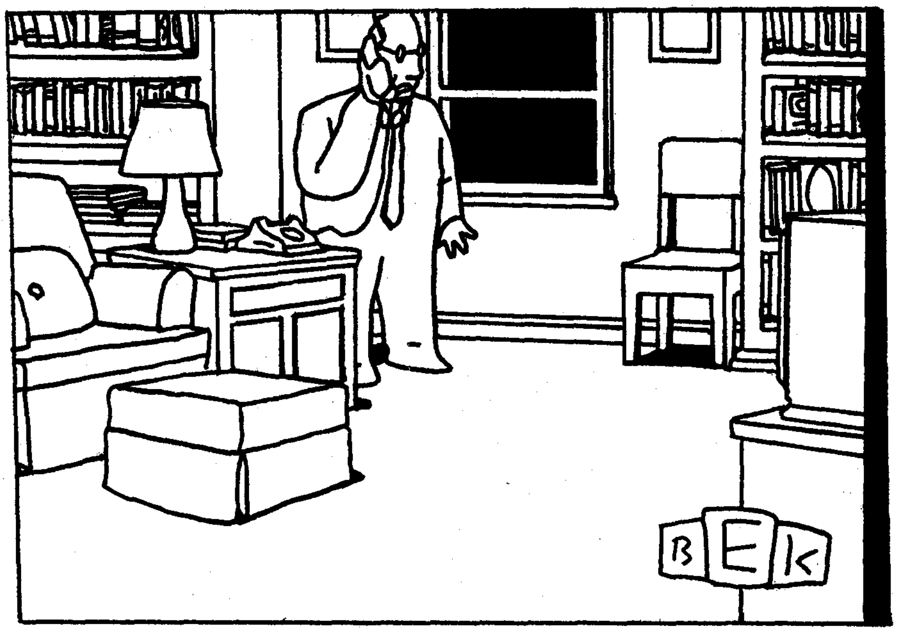
answered. "That's where you see the big advances. Remember at the last championship, those Russian eyes?" These were glass animal eyes that had a reflective paint embedded in them, so that if you shone a light they would shine back at you, sort of like the way real animals' eyes do. The men discussed those for a while, then talked about the new fish eyes being introduced this year, which have photographic transfers of actual fish eyes printed on plastic lenses. We happened to be in a restaurant with a sports theme, and there were about a hundred televisions on around the room, broadcasting dozens of different athletic events, but the men never glanced at them, and never stopped talking about their trade. We had all ordered barbecued ribs. When dinner was over, all three of them were fiddling around with the bones before the waitress came to clear our plates.

"Look at these," the man from Kentucky said, holding up a rib. "You could take these home and use them to make a skeleton."

In the seminars, the atmosphere was as sober and exacting as a tax-law colloquium. "Whiskers," one of the instructors said to the group, giving them a stern look. "I pull them out. I label them. There are left whiskers and there are right whiskers. If you want to get those top awards, you're going to have to think about whiskers." Everyone took notes. In the next room: "Folks, remember, your carcass is your key. The best thing you can do is to keep your carcass in the freezer. Freeze the head, cast it in plaster. It's going to really help if your head is perfect." During the breaks, the group made jokes about a T-shirt that had been seen at one of the regional competitions. The shirt said "PETA" in big letters, but when you got up close you saw that PETA didn't spell out People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, the bane of all hunters and, by extension, all taxidermists; it spelled out "People Eating Tasty Animals." Chuckles all around, then back to the solemn business of Mounting Flying Waterfowl: "People, follow what the bird is telling you. Study it, do your homework. When you've got it ready, fluff the head, shake it, and then get your eyes. There are a lot of good eyes out there on the market today. Do your legwork, and you can have a beautiful mount."

It was brisk and misty outside—the antler venders in the parking lot looked chilled and miserable—and the modest charms of Springfield, with its mall and the Oliver P. Parks Telephone Museum and Abraham Lincoln's tomb, couldn't compete with the strange and wondrous sights inside the hotel. The mere experience of waiting for the elevator—knowing that the doors would peel back to reveal maybe a man and a moose, or a bush pig, or a cougar—was much more exciting than the usual elevator wait in the usual Crowne Plaza hotel. The trade show was a sort of mad tea party of body parts and taxidermy supplies, things for pulling flesh off a carcass, for rinsing blood out of fur—a surreal carnality, but all conveyed with the usual trade-show earnestness and hucksterism, with no irony and no acknowledgment that having buckets of bear noses for sale was anything out of the ordinary. "Come take a look at our beautiful synthetic fur! We're the hair club for lions! If you happen to shoot a lion who is out of season or bald, we can provide you with a gorgeous replacement mane!" "Too many squirrels? Are they driving you nuts? Let us mount them for you!" "Divide and Conquer animal forms—an amazing advance in small-mammal mannequins, patent pending!"



"I'd love to, but I have a million lonely ritualistic things I need to do."

The big winner at the show turned out to be a tiny thing—a mount of two tree sparrows, submitted by a strapping German named Uwe Bauch, who had grown up in the former East Germany dreaming of competing in an American taxidermy show. The piece was precise and lovely, almost haunting, since the more you looked at it the more certain you were that the birds would just stop building their nest, spread their wings, and fly away. Early one morning, before I left Springfield, I took a last walk around the competition hall. It was quiet and uncanny, with hundreds of mounts arranged on long tables throughout the room; the deer heads clustered together, each in a slightly different pose and angle, looked like a kind of animal Roman forum caught in mid-debate. A few of the mounts were a little gory—a deer with a mailbox impaled on an antler, another festooned with barbed wire, and one with an arrow stuck in its brisket—and one display, a coyote whose torso was split open to reveal a miniature scene of the destruction of the World Trade Center, complete with little firemen and rubble piles, was surpassingly weird. Otherwise, the room was Biblically tranquil, the lion at last lying down with the Corsican lamb, the family of jackdaws in everlasting, unrequited pursuit of a big green beetle, and the stillborn Bengal-tiger cub magically revived, its face in an eternal snarl, alive-looking although it had never lived. ♦

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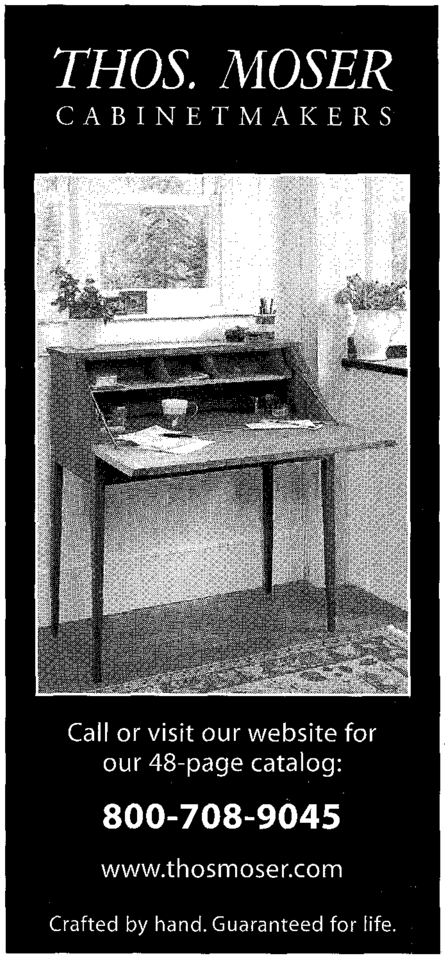
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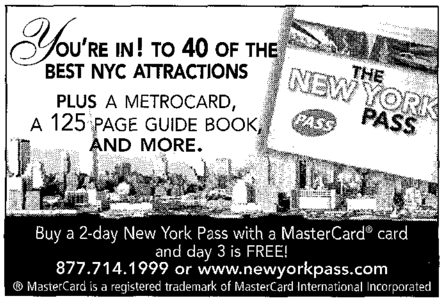
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BY FRANK GANNON

That's a good question. Am I ready to order? Let me answer it a little off to the side.

First of all, there *are* things that we know. I can look at this menu and see that. But there's a danger there. Do I "know" that hash browns are not included in the Original Grand Slam Breakfast? It says that on the menu, which, by the way, is nicely laminated and we're grateful to the laminator. But getting back to the hash-brown potatoes. I should "know" that they're not included.

The real truth is, there are no "knowns." This is a whole new menu. Are we in the past? No. Are we using the past's menu? No. Are there things that we know we know? Not exactly.

There are known unknowns. That is to say that there are things that we now know we don't know. But there are also unknown unknowns. These are things that we don't know we don't know. Got that? I want you to note that on the check.

By the way, the Meat Lover's Skillet is a fine piece of work. Thank you for putting that together.

Now, as far as ordering. First, juice. And a small glass of skim milk. Then, to answer the question that I know you were going to ask, yes, this maybe isn't the healthiest place to eat, but we're here. That much is not debatable. We're here. Here. Not someplace else. Not *there*. Back in philosophy class, that's what we used to call a "given." Now, who said we should be here? We don't know. Who picked this place? I can't say. Who drove the car? I wasn't paying attention. Who's paying for this? That will become clear. Where do we sit? Anywhere you like. Do you like a booth or a movable seat? Makes no difference. Do you want to sit facing the door? Not at this time.

All these questions are not "givens." We can talk about them and we will talk about them when the time is right. Now is not the time or the place to talk. It's the time to order, and that's exactly what we're doing.

Now, another thing. Does this place have a hell of a lot of cholesterol on the menu? Sure. Does cholesterol result in clogged arteries? Probably. Do clogged arteries cause cardiac events? Sometimes. Is it a good idea to clog up all your arteries so your blood stops moving completely? I doubt it. Has the blood completely stopped moving in several parts of my body? Sure. Am I going to grab my chest, fall on the ground, and twist my face into a grotesque mask of pain? Absolutely. Am I gonna go ahead and order the Original Grand Slam Breakfast? You betcha.

Look. I want bacon *and* sausage. Now, let me stop right here. Bacon is, we all know, and nobody seriously doubts it anymore, very similar to sausage. They both come from pigs, they're both cooked, and they're both eaten. They're similar. S-I-M-I-L-A-R. They're not the same. S-A-M-E. If they were the same, I wouldn't be ordering both of them. I don't think the most liberal person in the world can deny *that*, unless he wants to maintain the existence of a parallel universe, with spacemen and ray guns.

Now, is there going to be a cost for this? Sure. Will it be a high cost? I don't know. Am I going to pay for it? Don't know. Am I going to pretend I'm going to the bathroom and then just bolt on the check? Maybe. Are they going to catch me getting into my car? Not if I send somebody out to start the car and pull it up right outside the door so I can just run out and dive into the back seat. Do I have a good chance of getting away with it? Absolutely. Is this a crime? I personally think of it as defending myself from breakfast items of exorbitant price. Period.

It's just a rational way of dealing with expense, a very forward-looking, sensible way of dealing with breakfast in a very cost-conscious manner. That's all.

Thank you very much. ♦

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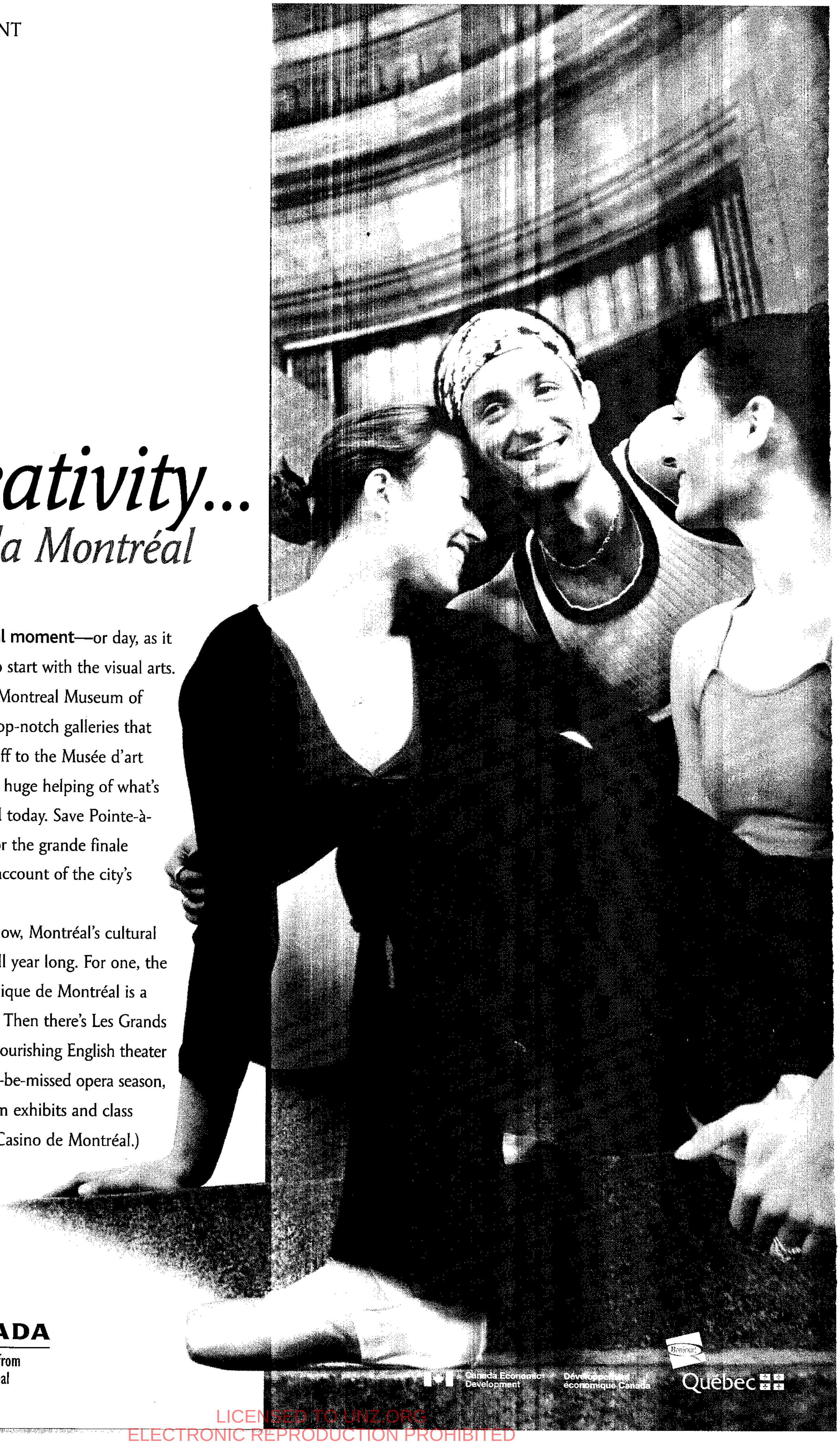
(And just so you know, Montréal's cultural landscape dazzles all year long. For one, the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal is a sublime experience. Then there's Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, flourishing English theater companies, a not-to-be-missed opera season, avant-garde museum exhibits and class cabaret acts at the Casino de Montréal.)



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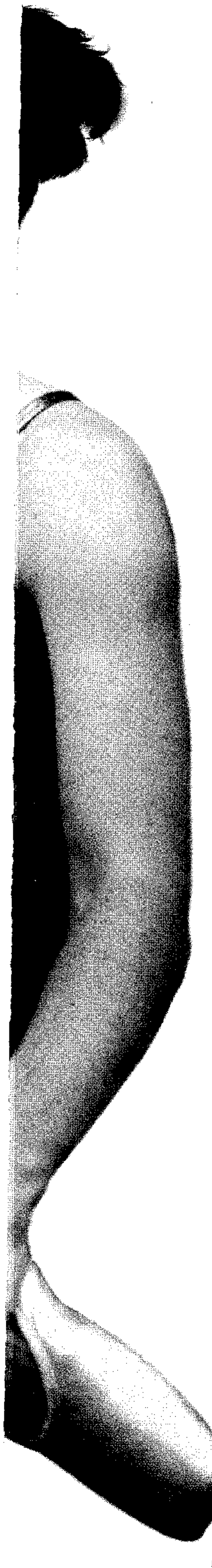

If there's one thing you've noticed since you arrived, it is that everything here either stems from, or is infused with, an intensity so powerful and creative, it can only be Gallic. You've felt it in the way your food is prepared and served, in the way people have welcomed you, in the way everybody is always ready to celebrate, in the way that nothing here seems strange or taboo.

Walking past the absolutely stunning Canadian Centre for Architecture, you see first-hand how all this passion produced the triumphal preservation of Montréal's rich heritage. Everywhere graceful stone structures from another era have been lovingly integrated into the long, cool lines of the 21st century.

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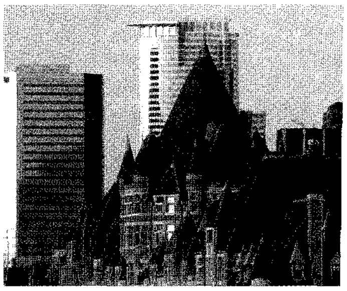

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You slept like a baby and now you wake up to a perfect summer morning. The sky is so blue it's almost a cliché. You decide to walk to breakfast. To find a *terrasse* and sit under a parasol with the morning paper or, better yet, that book you've been meaning to read since Christmas.

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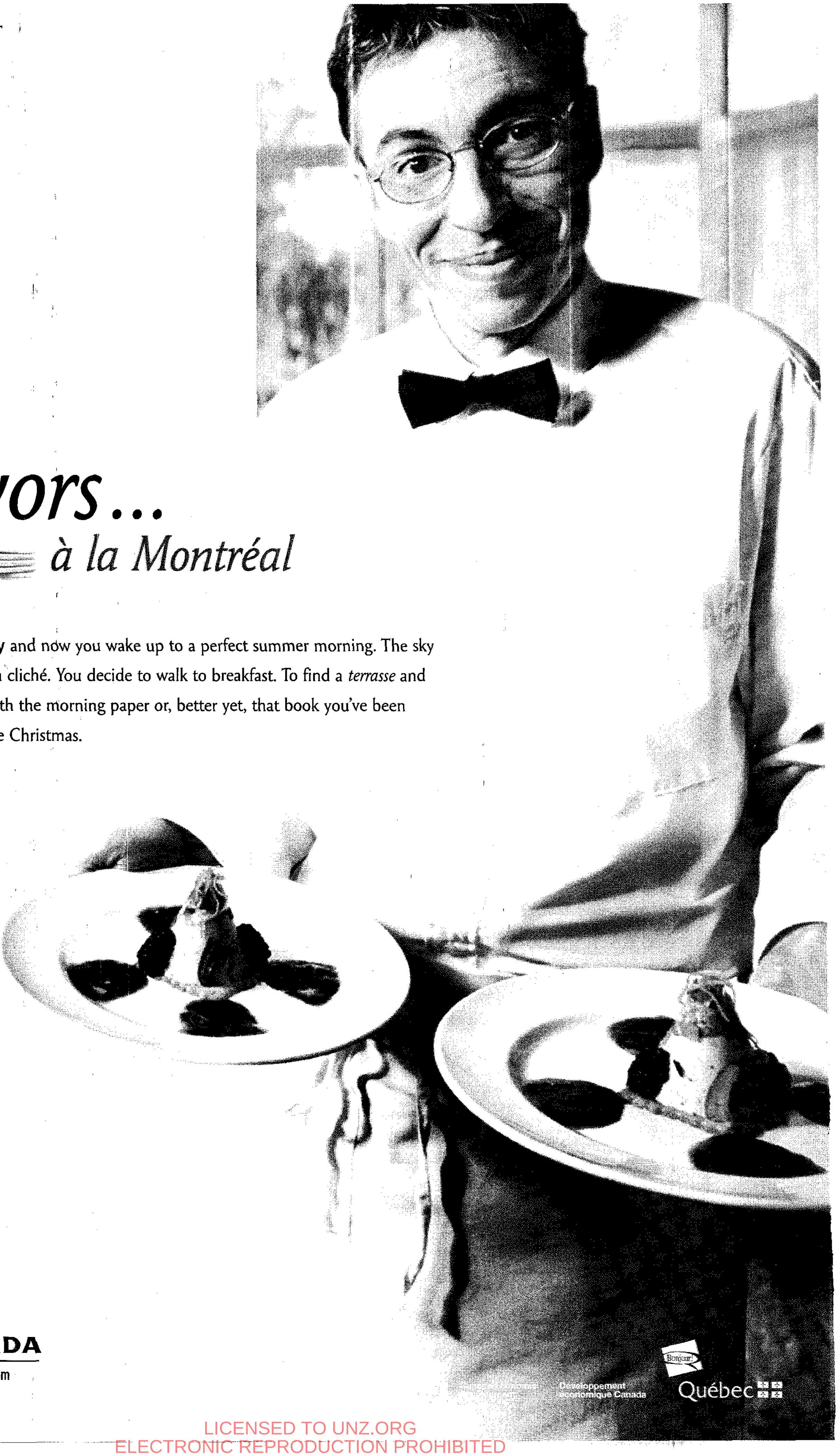

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Your day goes by at a leisurely—or totally frantic—pace (see following pages for ideas). Shopping sounds good. After everything you've heard about Québec's designers, you just have to check them out (plus that great 45% exchange rate means so much more for your money!). Probably you'll grab a bite to eat mid-afternoon. A sandwich maybe, say ham and melted brie on baguette, with tossed baby greens on the side and a glass (or two) of Chablis *frappé.* The markets make great sandwiches and you can pick up all kinds of local delicacies to take home. Of course, fast and delicious can mean just about anything here, from gourmet pizza to shish-taouk, sushi and, of course, Montréal's scrumptious bagel. Then there's Montréal's famous smoked meat sandwich, stacked so high you'll probably have to cut it with a knife and eat (at least some of it) with a fork.

Well, look at that! It's dinner time already. (Hey, no one ever said this was a good place to diet…) Remember, there is a code: When in Montréal, dine late and linger long. Go for atmosphere—music and ambiance lighting are *de rigueur,* of course, so are attentive waiters and the most creative chefs on the planet. Order just about anything cultivated, caught or raised in Québec: *pâté de foie, confit de canard,* mussels, deer, quail, river trout, salmon, lamb and amazing cheeses from the four corners of the province. Dessert? *Mais oui!* Have your cake and eat it too. Imagine feasting on life… *à la Montréal.*

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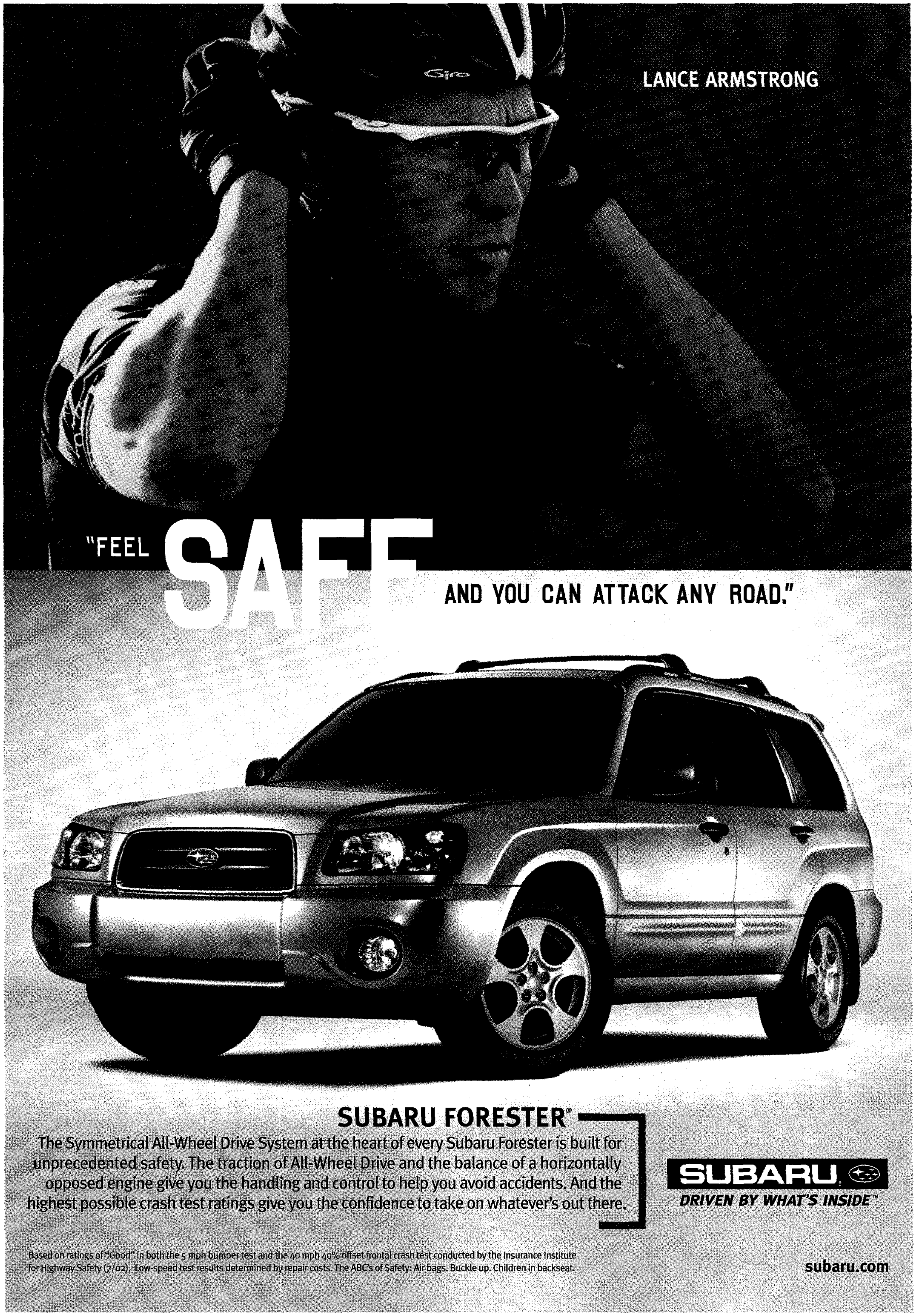

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LETTER FROM HARTFORD

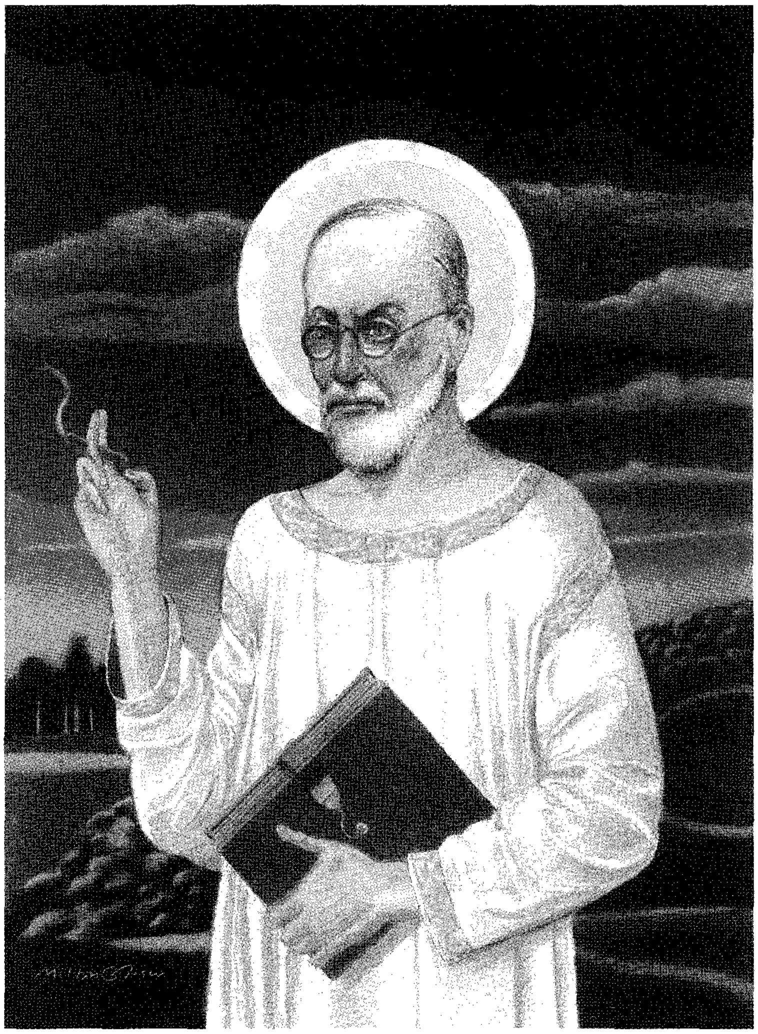
FATHERS' HELPER

How the Church used psychiatry to care for—and protect—abusive priests.

BY BARRY WERTH

In 1860, the Hartford Retreat for the Insane hired Frederick Law Olmsted to redesign the grounds of the sanitarium, which had been founded in 1824 as the nation's third mental hospital. Olmsted had presented his design for Central Park in 1858, and his views about the healing powers of nature meshed with the retreat's philosophy of providing "moral treatment" for those with mental disorders. "The enjoyment of scenery," he wrote, "employs the mind without fatigue and yet exercises it, tranquilizes it and yet enlivens it; and thus gives the effect of refreshing rest and reinvigoration of the whole system."

After the Civil War, during which Hartford had emerged as the wealthiest city in America, the retreat became a showcase for civic aspirations. Situated on a sloping greensward above the Connecticut River, its Victorian-style main building, embellished with turrets and gingerbread trim, was a Currier & Ives vision of an asylum, a place where errant behavior was tolerated rather than punished. In the twentieth century, the retreat competed with a small number of nationally known private sanitariums for patients who could afford months, sometimes years, of expensive care; prominent among them were the Menninger Clinic, then in Topeka, Kansas, and McLean Hospital, outside Boston, whose grounds were also landscaped by Olmsted.



Bishops began to accept psychiatry as a secular cousin to confession.

MILTON GLASER

During the Great Depression, the retreat cultivated an élite image as—in the words of its chief psychiatrist—"a combined hospital, country club, and university campus." In 1931, the board of directors changed the name to the Neuro-Psychiatric Institute of the Hartford Retreat. By 1943, the name had been changed again, to the Institute of Living. Over the years, the facilities were expanded to include private cottages, research buildings, separate club facilities for men and women, and a Tudor-style mews featuring a beauty salon, boutiques, and fashion shows. Patients had at their disposal a fleet of chauffeur-driven Packards, Lincolns, and Cadillacs. An in-house magazine, *The Chatterbox*, advertised "Summer at the Institute" with a *Saturday Evening Post*-style cover illustration showing well-coiffed patients lounging around a pool.

In 1951, the institute hired as its psychiatrist-in-chief Dr. Francis J. Braceland, one of the country's most influential leaders in the new field of "mental health." Like William Menninger, a co-founder of the Menninger Clinic (with his father, C. F. Menninger, and his brother Karl), Braceland had been prominent as a wartime military physician; he had served as the Navy's top psychiatrist, and he had also been a physician to President Roosevelt. After the war, Braceland resolved to liberate psychiatric treatment from the murkiness of Freudian psychoanalysis. Braceland, who had been a dean of the School of Medicine at Loyola University, in Chicago, and a professor at the Yale School of Medicine, set about transforming the institute's reputation as a sanitarium for the rich and famous into that of a nationally respected hospital for the seriously disturbed.

Braceland was a vigorous proselytizer on moral and cultural subjects; he characterized rock and roll as a "communicable disease," and he championed the creation of a federal agency to deal with a postwar society that he viewed as a cauldron of psychic ills. "The numbers of sick and suffering people are legion," he wrote, with a co-author, Dana L. Farnsworth, in 1969. Braceland and Farnsworth estimated that there were more than five million

"Can a rising tide lift a boat that has a huge hole in the bottom?"

alcoholics in the United States, that the population also contained countless drug addicts, and that beyond the million or so citizens languishing in psychiatric wards were millions more who suffered from "crippling emotional disorders." He believed that psychiatrists, like clergymen, constituted the nation's front line against a crisis that was becoming pandemic, and he advocated a rapprochement between religion and psychiatry to combat it.

A staunch Roman Catholic, Braceland called on the nation's Catholic bishops to shed their traditional antipathy to the teachings of psychiatry and to seek medical help for troubled priests. He was named a knight by Pope Pius XII and served as president of the American Psychiatric Association in 1956 and 1957. His twin callings were the subject of two books that he and Farnsworth edited—"Faith, Reason and Modern Psychiatry" and "Psychiatry, the Clergy and Pastoral Counseling"—and he served as the key conduit between the Church and secular psychiatry throughout the fifties and sixties. By 1970, the Institute of Living had become the nation's largest private psychiatric hospital, with four hundred beds. In the early nineteen-eighties, the institute started admitting priests who had been sent by their archdioceses in the hope that they would be cured of one or more disorders, including the sexual molestation of minors.

Early last year, as the American Catholic Church was engulfed in sex-abuse scandals involving priests and children, the quiet, mutually beneficial relationship between the Church and the Institute of Living became a matter of public concern. The Church's use of psychiatry—or, more precisely, the bishops' policy of sending priests suspected of having molested minors to psychiatrists and psychologists rather than reporting them to the police—has become one of the most disturbing, and costly, elements of the scandal.

Last spring, on March 17th, the Hartford *Courant* reported that Cardinal Edward M. Egan, the head of the Archdiocese of New York, had, as the bishop of Bridgeport, knowingly allowed several priests accused of multiple acts of sexual abuse to continue working. The Cardinal responded with a pastoral letter to New York's two and a half million Catholics in which he denied the allegations. His policy in Bridgeport, he said, had been to require accused priests "to be sent immediately to one of the most prominent psychiatric institutions in the nation"—the Institute of Living—"for evaluation." If the conclusions were favorable, Egan said, the priest was returned to ministry; if they were not favorable, he was not allowed to continue functioning as a priest. Egan's attempt to shift the accountability for abusive priests prompted an indignant rebuttal from officials at the institute, who, in effect, accused Egan and other Church officials of bad faith. In a subsequent article in the *Courant*, the institute's director, Dr. Harold I. Schwartz, was quoted as saying that in "many instances" Church officials had concealed information about past complaints of abuse against priests sent to Hartford for treatment. Schwartz added that the Church had also disregarded disclaimers that the institute was unqualified to determine whether a priest, once released, was fit for parish work. "In some cases, it would appear that our evaluations have been misconstrued in order to return priests to ministry," he said.

In a prescient book, "Sex, Priests, and Power," published in 1995, A. W. Richard Sipe, a psychotherapist and former Catholic priest, wrote, "The current sexual crisis finds the church in an interesting double bind with the psychological sciences. Being forced to face the problem of child sexual abuse by priests, the hierarchy has been quick to run for cover under the psychiatric umbrella—'these men are sick.' " Yet, as Sipe points out, the more that psychiatrists have investigated the problem of sexually abusive priests, the more the Church has lost control over individual cases, and the harder it has become to handle them in secrecy. "Not only will the extent of abuse of children be exposed," Sipe predicted eight years ago, "but all of the sexual activities and the mechanisms by which they are rationalized, denied, and defended will inevitably come to wider and wider public attention."

The origins of the Church's dilemma can be traced to the early Eisenhower years, when a Catholic prelate, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, had his own TV show, "Life Is Worth Living," and men like Boston's beloved Cardinal Cushing ruled an immense "state-within-a-state," as the historian Charles R. Morris called it in his authoritative book "American

Catholic." For decades, Catholic clergy with serious emotional problems had been sent automatically by bishops and their superiors to church-run asylums such as Seton Psychiatric Institute, in Baltimore, where, according to Sipe, thousands of priests were referred for treatment. Reports of abuse of minors by priests were sporadic, and the incidents were generally viewed as "lapses" brought on by excessive drinking. The Church dealt with such incidents internally, through pastoral counselling. Officially, the Church regarded psychiatry as anathema—confession without absolution. Bishop Sheen exhorted millions of TV viewers to seek forgiveness for their sins "on their knees in prayer, rather than on their back on a couch."

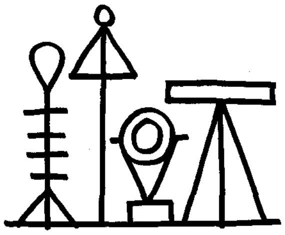
The Church's attitude toward Freud began to change in 1953, when St. John's University, in Collegeville, Minnesota, established an institute for mental health and invited prominent psychologists, psychiatrists, and Catholic clergymen to summer workshops. One of the forces behind the program was Francis Braceland. "Braceland was very close buddies with Cardinal Cushing," Sipe, who helped organize the summer sessions, told me recently. "In the summer of 1955, he got Cushing to fund one of our programs at St. John's. Bishops and religious superiors attended a series of workshops. I was allowed to sit in another room and listen in. They were discussing the problems of clergy."

Because of Braceland's high standing among the bishops, the Institute of Living began receiving referrals that had previously gone only to facilities with an official connection to the Church. For the bishops, whose basic teaching was "Nothing is impossible with God," the arrangement had tacit appeal. If an errant priest found it too shameful to confess to another priest, he might be induced to do so to a lay psychiatrist, who wouldn't judge him on moral grounds, and who was ethically bound not to report his actions. At the heart of confession is forgiveness: by telling the truth and showing contrition, the sinner is absolved and, presumably, goes forth determined to resist further wrongdoing. So it is with psychiatry—or so it was hoped. In the interest of forgiveness, of retaining good men who had faltered, of keeping the problem secret, most bishops made it a policy to send wayward priests to residential facilities for evaluation and treatment.

"Psychiatry and psychology were used to treat the offending cleric, contain scandal, and to placate the legal system if the cleric ran afoul of the law," Sipe wrote in a 1996 consultant's report for three cases in Dallas, including one in which the diocese was found liable for failing to supervise a priest who was running a "sex club" for teen-age boys and was ordered to pay a record hundred and twenty million dollars. "Victims and their families were usually reassured by Church authorities and subsequently ignored: 'Father is our problem and we will take care of the problem.' "

Statutes that made the sexual abuse of minors a felony had been on the books since the thirties, but it wasn't until the mid-sixties that states began to pass laws requiring that suspicions of sexual misconduct with minors be reported to authorities. By 1968, all fifty states had adopted such laws, and by 1974 the duty to report suspected sexual activity with children was covered under federal statute. Because psychiatrists and clergy were sometimes exempt from mandatory reporting, however, those who knew the extent of sexual abuse by priests reported only to one another.

In the mid-seventies, Sipe and his mentor, Dr. Leo Bartemeier, a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, made the first attempt to quantify the extent of pedophilia among priests. According to their estimate, six per cent of the clergy had been sexually involved with minors, including both prepubescents and adolescents. (No formal study has been done on pedophilia in the general population, but experts generally agree that the figure for abuse of prepubescents is below four per cent.) Meanwhile, in 1976, two priests who belonged to a small Catholic order called the Servants of the Paraclete started a treatment center at Jemez Springs, New Mexico; its aim was to deal specifically with sexual misconduct through psychotherapy, sex education, prayer, medication to reduce sex drive, and other therapies. Bishops who faced complaints of sexual misconduct by priests sent them to the center, which returned them to their parishes several months later, usually with recommendations for a followup program of treatment and the stipulation that they not minister to minors without supervision.



In 1981, Michael Peterson, a priest and psychiatrist who had been openly gay before joining the clergy, founded St. Luke Institute, near Washington, D.C, for priests struggling with alcohol and drug addiction. Two years later, largely in response to the case of Gilbert Gauthe, a Louisiana priest who was sentenced to twenty years in prison for sexually abusing thirty-five youths, St. Luke's began counselling clergymen who had been accused of molesting children.

The Gauthe case spawned numerous lawsuits. Criminal investigations revealed that Gauthe's superiors had known of his activities for a decade before his arrest; soon after his conviction, victims' families brought suit against the diocese, and they eventually collected more than twenty million dollars in settlements. As Sipe observes, the bishops' "secret system" had abruptly been breached.

For the Institute of Living, the bishops' need for clinical cover in the face of these costly lawsuits came at an opportune time. "The eighties were a decade of ruin for the institute," a former senior staff psychiatrist told me. In 1981, he said, the institute had three hundred and eighty beds, drew patients from around the country, kept them for months, and had a six-month waiting list. By 1990, after H.M.O.s had rewritten the rules for private in-patient care throughout the Northeast and elsewhere, the institute had become a cash-strapped regional facility with a hundred and twenty beds, many of them available. Amid fears that the institute might go out of business, the board of directors aggressively expanded its programs for priests and other professionals—doctors, lawyers, judges, executives—whose care could be provided for by generous third-party payments. "With priests, of course, the pocket was bottomless," this psychiatrist recalls. "The Church would pay what it took, for as long as was necessary." He added that the treatment of troubled priests, some of whom had been accused of pedophilia, soon became one of the institute's most lucrative services, in a program called the Impaired Professional and Clergy Program of the Retreat.

The institute already employed a priest from the Hartford Archdiocese, Father John Kiely, to counsel patients in spiritual matters and conduct daily Mass. In the late eighties, it expanded its program for members of the clergy and religious orders to fifteen to twenty beds. The senior consultant to that program was Dr. James Gill, who had published and lectured widely on psychosexual issues. "Gill had a virtually unique position," Sipe told me. "Only nine Jesuits were psychiatrists at the time—Gill, I think, was the first. He had apartments in Switzerland, Boston, and San Francisco. He consulted with everybody."

After Braceland died, in 1985, Gill became the institute's chief emissary to the bishops. Last spring, I met with him in a small, sparsely furnished library on the second floor of the Braceland Building. Gill, who is seventy-seven, is bald and cherubic. Peering through rectangular bifocals and speaking in a voice of practiced patience, he seemed a throwback to the benign movie priests of the forties and fifties. I'd been told that Gill had advanced prostate cancer, but he seemed lively and alert. He told me that his role at the institute has been to interview all incoming clergy and religious and conduct special counselling sessions that "emphasized the humanity of the patient." He added, "Of course, I had a P.R. function, too. I had developed a good relationship with a lot of bishops. If I said this was a good place to send a person, most of them would take my word for it."

I asked him to describe the institute's approach to treating sexually abusive priests. "No. 1," he replied, "we do a comprehensive assessment of what's going on. Did he molest? How many times? Most are not ready for confession and find ways to deny or rationalize their behavior." He continued, "Once they acknowledge what they've done, we're very concerned about teaching them to set boundaries, to live with self-control—to be expressive in ways that aren't destructive to themselves and others. You've got some who transgress because they're immature and some who transgress because they're sick. Our job is to figure out what's immaturity and what's pathology. When you actively violate the vow of celibacy with a child, when you step over that line, we know that you have stepped into pathology."

1943

They toughened us for war. In the high-school auditorium
Ed Monahan knocked out Dominick Esposito in the first round

of the heavyweight finals, and ten months later Dom died
in the third wave at Tarawa. Every morning of the war

our Brock-Hall Dairy delivered milk from horse-drawn wagons
to wooden back porches in southern Connecticut. In winter,

frozen cream lifted the cardboard lids of glass bottles,
Grade A or Grade B, while marines bled to death in the surf,

or the right engine faltered into Channel silt, or troops marched
—what could we do?—with frostbitten feet as white as milk.

—Donald Hall

In 1986, Bishop Robert J. Banks, an assistant to Cardinal Bernard Law, until recently the head of the Boston Archdiocese, learned that a complaint of sexual abuse had been made against Father John Geoghan, a priest in the parish of St. Julia, in the town of Weston, near Boston. Within the archdiocese, Father Geoghan's problems with pedophilia were well documented. He had been removed from four other parishes because of charges that he had molested children, and he was currently undergoing treatment by a psychiatrist chosen by the archdiocese. When the psychiatrist warned Banks to "clip [the priest's] wings before there is an explosion," Banks sent Geoghan for evaluation to St. Luke's, where he was diagnosed as a homosexual pedophile. Banks told Geoghan to leave the ministry, but instead the archdiocese placed him on sick leave and referred him for further treatment to the Institute of Living, where he remained for three months.

According to Geoghan's discharge summary from the institute, which was first made public in January, 2002, in the Boston *Globe*, he had been admitted on the basis of three separate allegations of abuse from "several years ago." It is unknown whether the 1986 complaint or others in the Church's locked files were reported to the institute, because Church and hospital officials have refused to comment on the matter. In any case, the discharge summary, which describes Geoghan's stay at the institute as "uneventful," is notable for its sympathetic tone and its reliance on Geoghan's own accounts of his past behavior. "During certain stressful, vulnerable points during his priesthood, [the patient] did focus on immature sexual objects," his psychiatrist, Dr. Robert Swords, wrote. "It was not a classical case of pedophilia, in that the abuse was sporadic and eventually did stop and had a playful, childlike quality to it. It was not sexually stimulating or eroticized, and it was not sadistic nor without remorse."

Geoghan saw Swords three times a week for private fifty-minute sessions, in addition to attending a thrice-weekly unit group, a twice-a-week human-development group, a clergy group, and an assertiveness group. He confessed to fondling the genitals of prepubescent boys between 1975 and 1979. However, Swords wrote, "The patient reassured us that these impulsive episodes of pedophilia were now under control and he had integrated his life in a more constructive way, since he began getting involved in psychotherapy and seeing a psychiatrist ten years ago."

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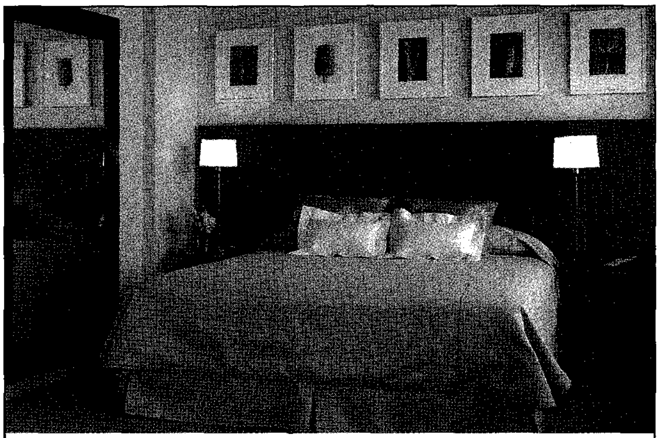

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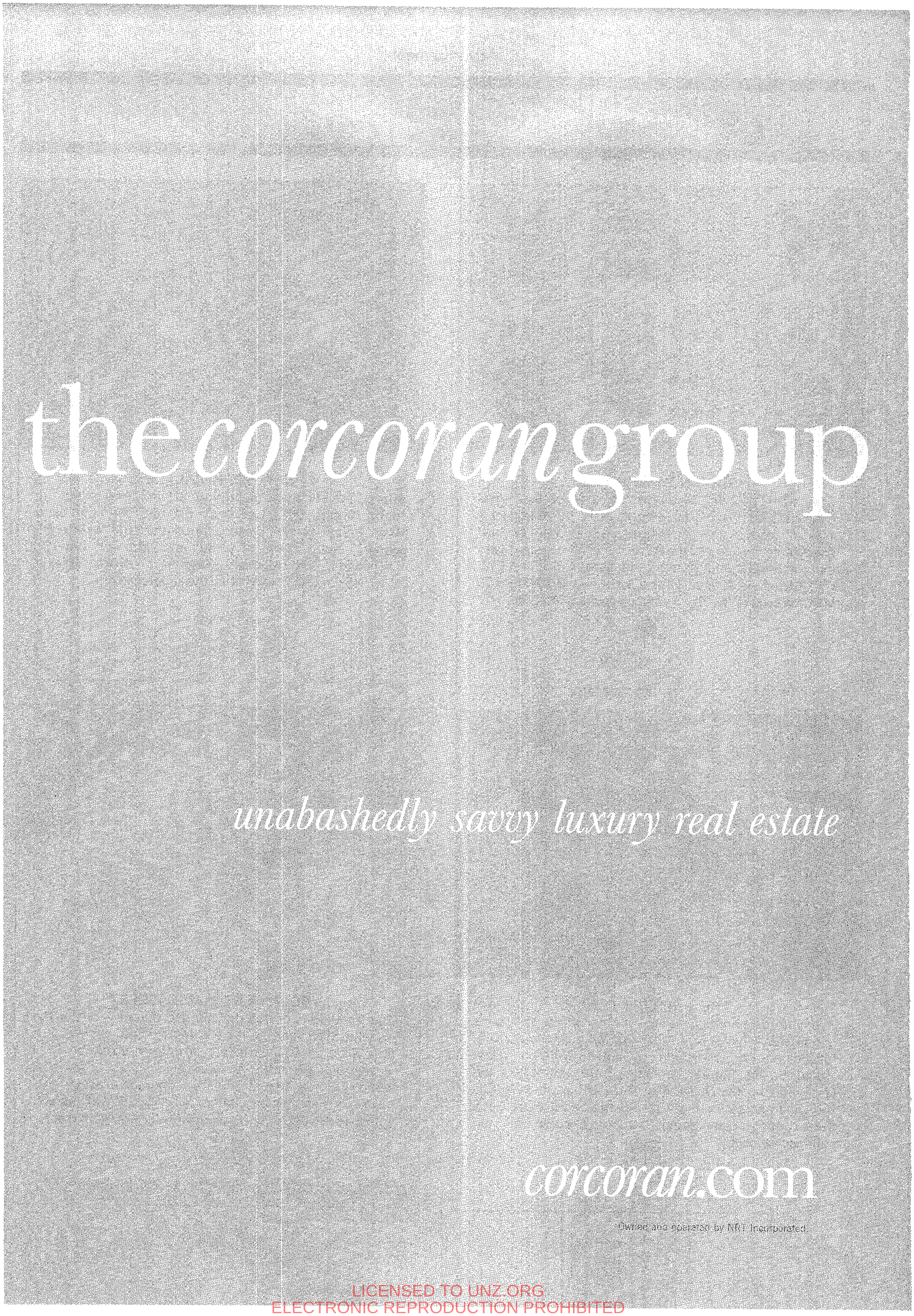

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Dr. Leslie Lothstein, who is director of the institute's psychology department and an internationally known expert on sexual disorders, also evaluated Geoghan. According to Swords's report, Lothstein “found the patient quite defensive and somewhat concealing, but did not feel that the patient presented any classic pedophilic symptoms, and that basically his problems centered around immaturity, intimacy, childhood deprivation and having a chronic dependent personality structure.”

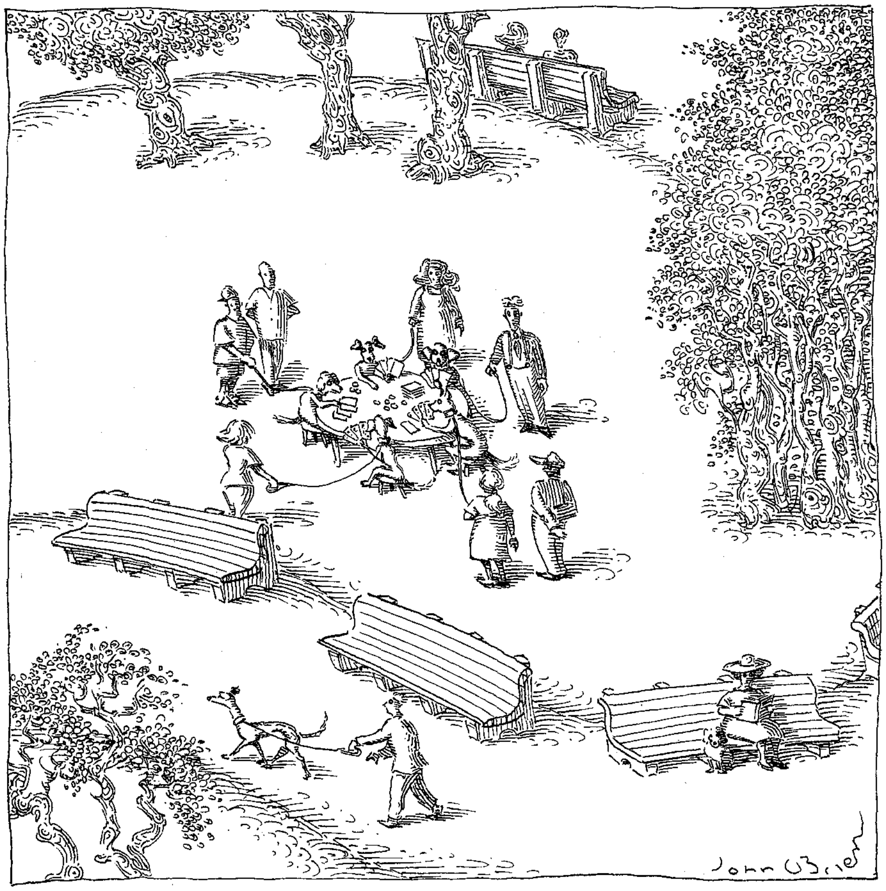
Geoghan's discharge diagnosis was “atypical pedophilia, in remission”—a rare ad-hoc piece of medical nomenclature. For determining treatments, psychiatrists rely on the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, a reference book compiled by the American Psychiatric Association. *DSM-III*, which was published in 1980, defined pedophiles as those who seek sexual activity with children “as a repeatedly preferred or exclusive method of achieving sexual excitement.” Lothstein, however, believed that a variety of factors—mainly celibacy and the idea that sexual desire for women is evil—inhibited some priests from having a “healthy acknowledgment of their heterosexual interests,” which caused them to refocus their interests on boys, who could be controlled and thus were seen as safer. He has written that men who abuse prepubescents are, for the most part, incurable. At the same time, he has suggested that a sexual fixation on adolescents can be overcome through intense therapy and “rigorous” supervision and followup. In any event, Geoghan, who later admitted to abusing prepubescents as well as adolescents, left the institute with instructions for stress reduction and “leisure-skills management.”

By the end of the eighties, most experts had concluded that pedophilia was virtually incurable. Still, there was general agreement about how to minimize relapses. First, the offender had to acknowledge the deviance—and harmful consequences—of his behavior. The most effective treatments were aimed at restraining both the pedophile's access to children and his ability to hide, rationalize, and deny his actions. Along with libido-inhibiting drugs and diagnostic devices like the penile plethysmograph—a device attached to the genitals that measures arousal and is often considered a “sexual lie detector,” despite questions about its reliability—specialized sex-offender therapy began to include compulsory twelve-step therapy. (Many specialists now believe that the only way to insure that chronic pedophiles accept what they've done is to have their treatment adjudicated—legally mandated—so that they know that those who treat them are obligated to talk openly with law-enforcement authorities, who can hold them to account with the statements of victims and the threat of imprisonment.)

The report, for all its guardedly positive tone, stopped short of recommending that Geoghan be reassigned to parish work. A few days after receiving it, Bishop Banks wrote to Dr. Vincent Stephens, the director of the retreat program, “I am a bit disappointed and disturbed. When I met with Father Kiely, Father Gill and Dr. Swords, I was assured that it would be all right to reassign Father Geoghan to pastoral ministry and that he would not present a risk for the parishioners whom he would serve. It was on the basis of that assurance that I went forward with his assignment.” (Banks had already authorized Geoghan's return to St. Julia's Parish, beginning in November, 1989.) Banks requested a clarification from the institute.

Swords complied with a placating letter whose tone was markedly more positive than that of his initial report: “Let me first say that we judge Father Geoghan to be clinically quite safe to resume his pastoral ministry after observation, evaluation and treatment here for three months. The probability that he would sexually act out again is quite low. However, we cannot guarantee that it could not re-occur. It is both reasonable and therapeutic for him to be reassigned back to his parish.” He added, “The clinical decision to have him resume his pastoral ministry was ours, but the final administrative decision had to be yours.” This apparently satisfied Banks, who, in a reply to Swords, called the clarification “very helpful.”

A year later, Swords had a followup meeting with Geoghan at the institute, after which he wrote to Banks, “From what I could gather he continues to do well and remains psychologically fit for pastoral work in general, including chil-



dren. He monitors himself well and from what he tells me has his sex drive under firm control."

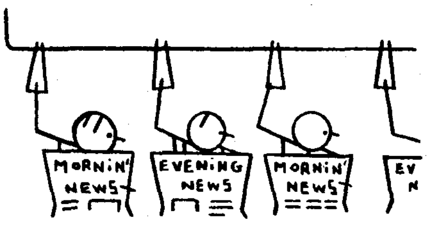
In October, 1991, the Boston Archdiocese received a complaint that Geoghan had "proselytized" a ten-year-old boy at a swimming pool in Waltham, using language that seemed "open to prurient interpretation" to the Salvation Army volunteer who witnessed it. During the next three years, the archdiocese received three more complaints about him from parishioners, including one from a single mother who maintained that he had molested her four sons and made obscene phone calls to them. Church officials sent Father Geoghan to Massachusetts General Hospital for observation, and then for evaluation at St. Luke's, which has a reputation for treating abusive priests in a far less forgiving manner than the one that prevailed at the institute. Patients at St. Luke's were stripped down, hooked up to plethysmographs—"peter meters," the priests called them—and videotaped. In this atmosphere, Father Geoghan admitted to having been a pedophile since the nineteen-sixties.

On January 18, 2002, Geoghan was convicted on charges of indecent assault and battery in connection with the 1991 swimming-pool incident. In February, he was sentenced to nine to ten years in prison. After the verdict, Law explained, "However much I regret having assigned him, John Geoghan was never assigned by me to a parish without psychiatric or medical assessments indicating that such assignments were appropriate." In September, 2002, the Archdiocese of Boston settled eighty-six lawsuits against Geoghan, paying damages of ten million dollars. After Law's resignation, in December, the Boston Archdiocese threatened to seek bankruptcy protection to avoid paying claims arising from Geoghan's crimes and those of another priest, Paul R. Shanley, who was treated at the institute in 1993.

In the fall of 1989, when Cardinal Egan was the bishop of Bridgeport, he transferred a priest named Charles Carr to a new job as boys' spiritual director at Central Catholic High School in Norwalk. Prior to the appointment, a parishioner alleged that Father Carr had made sexual advances on her eleven-year-old son in 1982. Alarmed by the news of Carr's new posting, she met with Egan's aide the Reverend Laurence Bronkiewicz, a monsignor in the Bridgeport Diocese. Egan subsequently sent Carr to be evaluated at the institute, where he denied that he had abused the boy.

In late January of 1990, Dr. Howard Iger, who had succeeded Stephens as director of the retreat program and who supervised Carr's evaluation, wrote to Bronkiewicz, who was handling the matter. "It is my feeling that psychiatrists are in a particularly weak position when trying to make judgments about whether or not an individual is lying," Iger wrote. "We are certainly in a weak position when we try to make predictions about future behavior. . . . It is important that a separate administrative procedure, or internal due process procedure, be established within an organization to deal with concerns about aberrant behavior."

Despite Iger's warnings and disclaimers, Carr was returned to his job at Central Catholic. When Bronkiewicz received another complaint, from a man who said that Carr had fondled his eleven-year-old son in 1981, Egan sent Carr back to the institute for treatment. Again, Iger was asked to advise the diocese about how to handle the accusation. In a long, confidential letter that is included in sealed court records obtained by the *Courant*, Iger reiterated his view of the retreat's role. "[Although] this further report does increase the likelihood that Fr. Carr has, in fact, acted in a sexually inappropriate manner in the past," Iger wrote, it was up to the diocese alone to decide what to do with him. "I believe that it is necessary for you to take some administrative action to protect both Fr. Carr and the public from the possibility of lapses in his judgment and behavior in the future." Iger urged Church officials to confront Carr with their concerns about his ability "to honestly acknowledge" past actions, and to consider transferring him someplace away from children. (Carr consistently denied the accusations against him.)



Egan followed Iger's advice, in part. He allowed Carr to return to Central Catholic, but barred him from activities that involved children. Five years later, in March of 1995, the first lawsuit against the diocese in connection with Carr's alleged abuses was filed in court.

A decade of post-Gauthe lawsuits challenged the Church to review its policy of sending sexually abusive priests for counselling rather than to the police. In 1993, persistent news accounts about James Porter, a former priest accused of raping and molesting at least a hundred children in several states, including Massachusetts, forced Cardinal Law to admit publicly what he called "the sin of sexual abuse" among priests. The following May, Law invited several nationally known lay experts on sexual abuse to lunch at his residence to discuss what to do in the event of further sexual revelations involving priests. "We told them that the way they had handled these cases was wrong and was endangering children," Carolyn Newberger, a psychologist and former research director of the family-development program at Boston's Children's Hospital, recalled last year. "We stressed the importance of reporting these cases to the civil authorities. And we told them that, no matter what they thought about priests having been cured or having put these problems behind them, there was a strong likelihood of a repeat of this behavior." In 1995, the Servants of the Paraclete's treatment center in Jemez Springs was closed down, after it became mired in sexual-abuse lawsuits against priests who had been treated there.

In this climate, Church officials began quietly to reassess their relationship with the Institute of Living. In April of 1996, the Reverend Brian M. Flatley, an assistant to Cardinal Law, attached a memo to Geoghan's file after Geoghan refused to return to St. Luke's for further treatment, asking instead for permission to reënter the institute's retreat program: "Father Geoghan feels that he was treated much more professionally at the Institute of Living. . . . I do not have confidence in the [institute]."

In 1992, the institute's role in the evaluation and treatment of troubled priests was reduced to that of an outpatient program, and in 1994 it became a subsidiary of Hartford Hospital. Nonetheless, the pedophilia scandal has undermined what had once been a solid marriage of convenience. When I asked Dr. Harold Schwartz, the current director of the institute, to comment on the Church's charge that the retreat's doctors had been too optimistic in their reports, he expressed indignation "that the Church would point its finger at us to deflect attention from its own culpability."

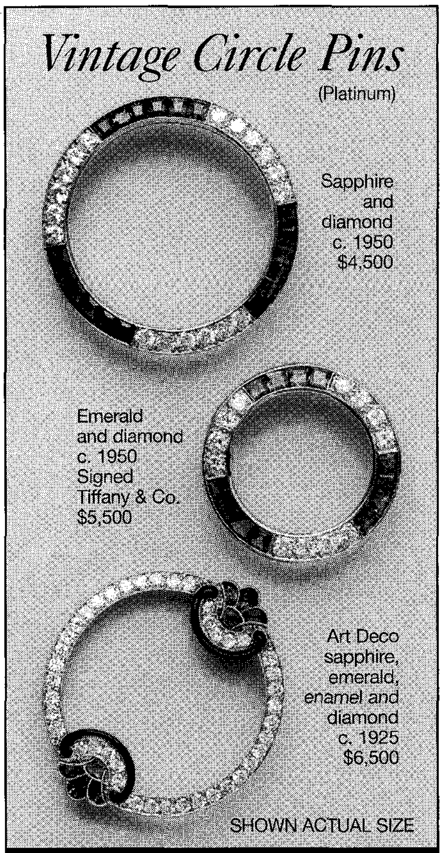
And, as Iger realized during the Carr case, both partners were hobbled in their ability to make accurate judgments. "You had to know what you didn't know in order to know if you had incomplete information," he told me recently at his office in Hartford. "And, of course, the Church didn't have a proper investigative arm. They haven't had one since the Inquisition."

Last June, I sat in the near-empty gallery of a courtroom in Norwich, Connecticut, at a pretrial hearing in one of the hundreds of civil cases that involve priests accused of pedophilia. The plaintiff, a male nurse living in New York—he was identified only as "John Doe"—had brought suit against a former priest named Richard T. Buongirno, charging that the priest had molested him when he was nine years old, in 1987, and again as a teen-ager. In 1994, the Norwich Diocese sent Buongirno to the Institute of Living for treatment after he admitted to having had sex with a sixteen-year-old boy when he was a seminarian, in the early seventies. The plaintiff's lawyer, Robert I. Reardon, Jr., argued that by failing to report the earlier offense against his client, the diocese had skewed a psychiatric evaluation at the institute, thus enabling Buongirno to return to his position and continue abusing the plaintiff.

Reardon, a successful personal-injury lawyer, had made a blanket request for the names of all the priests the institute had ever treated for sexual misconduct, along with any "contracts, agreements, memorandums of understanding, policies, procedures, correspondence, memos, notes or other documents" regarding them. The judge allowed into evidence just one heavily abridged record of correspondence between the institute and an unnamed diocese. A few weeks later, Reardon argued several more motions to uncover the diocese's relationship with the hospital, and this time the judge was more agreeable, permitting him to depose Dr. Lothstein. "Nothing particular to the treatment of Father Buongirno," he said, "but you're free to inquire about the professionals program."

For the Institute of Living, which guards its long tradition of discretion so rigorously that it refuses to make public the names of patients admitted nearly two centuries ago for "religious terror," "fanatical insanity," or "metaphysical hairsplitting," the judge's ruling constitutes a devastating invasion of medical privacy. In September, after denying the Church's attempts to have the suit dropped, Judge Ian McLachlan ordered all sides to consult with a federal mediator. In March of this year, the parties settled, with the Diocese of Norwich and Buongirno agreeing to pay three hundred and fifty thousand dollars each. Neither the priest nor the diocese admitted wrongdoing.

Last spring, the institute took steps to distance itself from the Church by responding to potential clients with a form that requires them to reveal "the full facts and circumstances" leading to a referral, including all prior complaints, disciplinary actions, treatment records, and criminal and civil allegations. "Since then," Dr. Schwartz told me, "we've had very few inquiries" from the Church. Looking back, he acknowledged that as long as the goals of psychiatric treatment were intertwined with the Church's determination to return priests to duty, the system was severely flawed. However, what is required, he said, is not greater scrutiny of psychiatric methods but greater outside regulation of the Church—the sort of monitoring that governs teachers, social workers, doctors, day-care providers, and child psychologists and which the Church has historically resisted. "It gets down to the issue of how the Church conducts itself within the larger society," Schwartz said. "We're talking about something a lot bigger than psychiatry." ♦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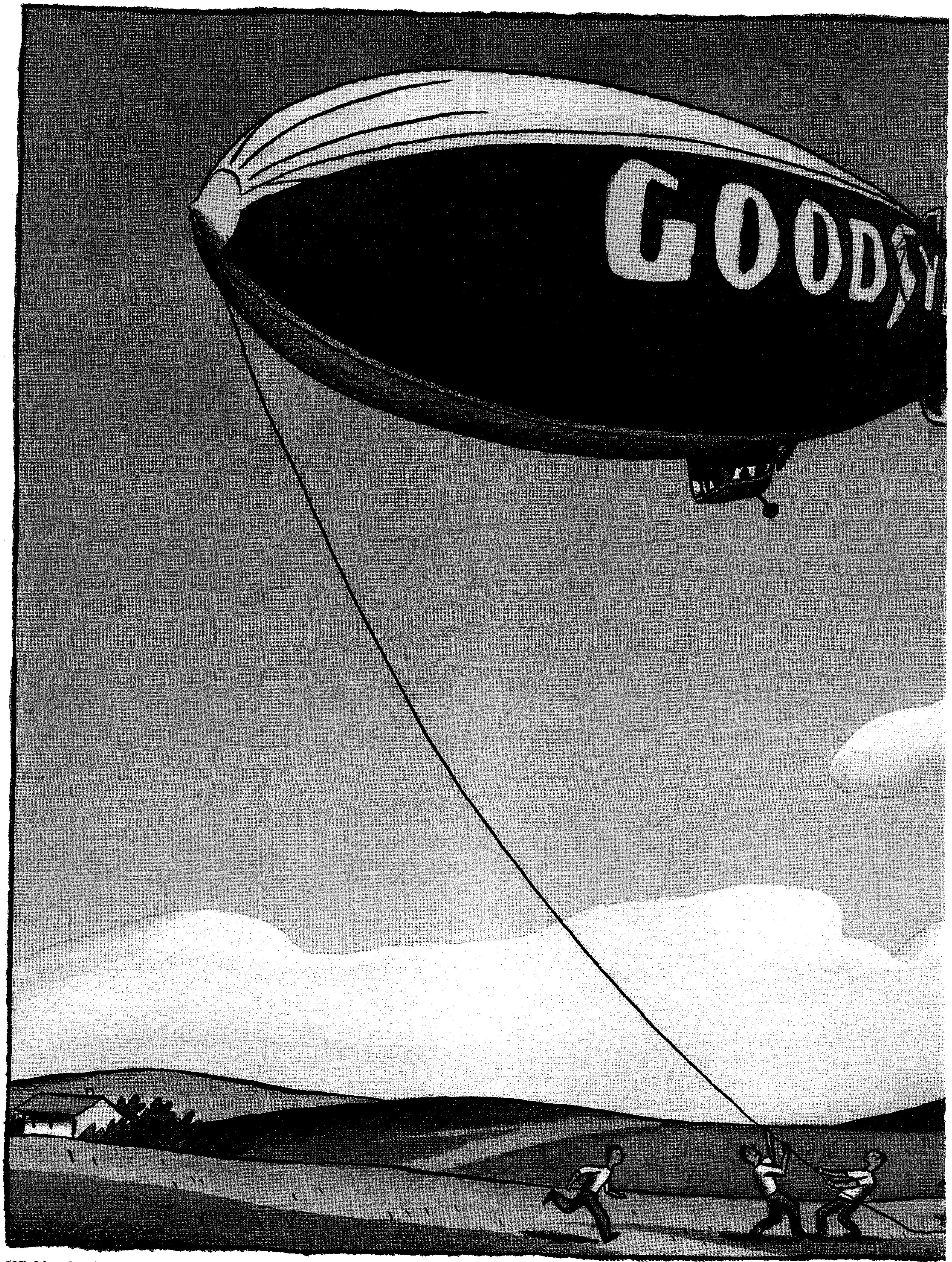


JACQUES DE LOUSTAL

Within the tiny airship subculture—there are fewer blimp pilots than there are astronauts—working for Goodyear remains the most

coveted job on the planet.

ANNALS OF AVIATION

THE LIGHT STUFF

Learning to fly the Goodyear blimp.

BY DAVID SAMUELS

"Starting one, clear one!" Jon Conrad called out. As the port-side propeller of the Spirit of America, the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company's newest blimp, whirred to life, Conrad sat up straight in his high-backed pilot's chair. His goal this afternoon, he said, was to "wear the airship"—which meant handling the blimp in a particularly unhurried, laid-back fashion. Conrad, who had recently been named Goodyear's only pilot-in-training, sat to the left of his instructor, John Crayton. After Crayton gave him a nod, the young pilot looked through the cabin windshield and signalled to the ground crew, who stood alert on the wide, grassy airfield. He held up two fingers and made a rotary motion, then started the second prop. After pausing for several seconds, he spread one palm wide and punched the air with his other hand, communicating his readiness for takeoff. The Spirit of America rolled across the airfield, bounced once, then sailed serenely up into the fading blue sky above Carson, California.

Conrad was dressed in a white short-sleeved pilot's shirt and a Stars and Stripes tie. His right hand rested on a large wooden wheel, which he moved gently back and forth to adjust the altitude of the ship. He inched the blimp right or left by using two foot pedals, which he worked as if he were a church organist, minutely flexing toes, heels, and calves to counter the shifting air currents.

The metal cabin of the Spirit of America, which seats six and resembles a ski gondola, offered spectacular, two-hundred-and-seventy-degree views of suburban Los Angeles. As the blimp glided upward, the student chatted amiably with his teacher. A thirty-three-year-old native of Scottsbluff, Nebraska, Conrad is an even-tempered, pleasant fellow whose conversation is punctuated by exclamations like "I'm as chipper as a blue jay." Well over six feet tall, he has 20/400 eyesight (a debility that would disqualify him from becoming a pilot in the Air Force). He resembles a grownup version of the cheerful lad in overalls who appears on cans of Dutch Boy paint. In the three months since accepting Goodyear's offer and moving to Hermosa Beach, California, he had yet to ask a woman out on a date. Instead, he spent his evenings between Wednesday and Sunday—blimp pilots have Monday and Tuesday off—floating a thousand feet above the freeways between Los Angeles and San Diego.

Blimp pilots prefer to think of themselves as captains of airships; indeed, blimp flight has an oddly nautical feel. The ship rises upward like a balloon, yet it feels supported underneath, too, as if it were floating on water. Equipped with motorized propellers and a set of steering controls, blimps are easier to navigate than hot-air balloons, which lack thrust. The two hundred thousand cubic feet of helium trapped inside a Goodyear blimp can lift about twelve thousand pounds. The aircraft's two side engines provide aerodynamic control, allowing a pilot to fly precise figure eights or box patterns over a sports stadium.

The derivation of the word "blimp" is unclear. One common explanation is that it was coined in 1915 by Lieutenant A. D. Cunningham, of the British Navy. During an inspection at a landing strip in Capel, England, legend has it, the lieutenant playfully poked one airship's balloon with his thumb; an amusing sound was produced when the bag's fabric snapped back into shape, and Cunningham responded with a verbal imitation: "Blimp!"

The spongy exterior of a Goodyear airship, Conrad explained, is made of polyester fabric coated with rubber. The envelope contains a central helium balloon, along with fore and aft air bags, or ballonets, which help control the ship's pitch. He pointed to two white toggles mounted on the ceiling above his chair; by pulling them, he could adjust the inflation level of the ballonets. Since air is heavier than helium, pumping air into the fore ballonet caused the nose of the blimp to dip; air in the aft ballonet caused the nose to rise. A red toggle allowed for the emergency dumping of fuel. Blue and yellow toggles operated the blimp's helium vents, which were situated on either side of the airship, inside the letter "Y" in "GOODYEAR." Helium could be vented in an emergency, Conrad said—if, for instance, the blimp soared dangerously above its ten-thousand-foot flight ceiling.

There are three Goodyear blimps currently operating in the United States: one is based in Carson, California; one in Pompano Beach, Florida; and the third at the company's headquarters, in Akron, Ohio. Each blimp has four pilots. Conrad's mentor, John Crayton, is known as the P.I.C. of the Spirit of America; those initials stand for "pilot in charge." He is a courtly, old-school gentleman with a walrus mustache and an easy manner, whose twin mantras are "Get lower" and "Get slower." As Conrad curved the blimp northward, Crayton said, "I have a basic theory of blimp pilots. It's all about getting used to where the buttons are, and learning patience."

After takeoff, Conrad settled into the normal cruising pace of thirty-five miles an hour; at that speed, even the lightest single-engine airplane would fall out of the sky. Blimps are so placid that they are the only aircraft certified for flight without seat belts. Cartoonish and otherworldly in flight, blimps are also quite noisy, especially when both propellers are running at full throttle. Every Goodyear pilot I met except Conrad is partially deaf.

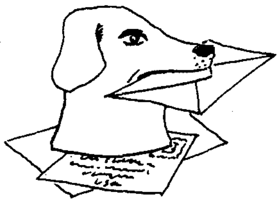
Conrad radioed the control tower, which is in Torrance. "I'd like to climb to twenty-five hundred feet, because of some clouds up here," he said. Rolling the wheel backward on its axis, he caused the elevator flaps at the rear of the airship to tilt upward. The blimp ascended smoothly. To the west, the sun hung on the edge of the Pacific Ocean.

At 4:55 P.M., the sun set, and the sky along the coastline turned pink. Dark clouds hung low on the horizon. "The sunset's really loaded up with reds, golds, and pinks," Crayton said. The two pilots stopped talking for several minutes and gazed out at the subtly shifting skyscape. The clouds developed a mellow tinge; the sky darkened, and the sandy-orange underside of nearby clouds became firelight bronze. Watching the sun set over the Pacific while floating in a Goodyear blimp is like being suspended inside the world's biggest lava lamp.

As Conrad calmly navigated the skies, his goal of securing a seat in the clouds felt tantalizingly within reach. Two weeks from now, on January 15th, Don Ploskunak, Goodyear's chief pilot, would arrive from Akron to check out Conrad's skills. If he failed the written or the oral portion of the daylong exam, or made a serious mistake during the three-hour flight test, he would be out of a job. If Conrad passed, he could look forward to a trip to San Diego, where he would help cover the Super Bowl, Goodyear's biggest television event of the year.

"This airship is bigger and more stable than the ships I used to fly," Conrad said admiringly. "You have more power behind you. It's more like flying a truck—a big semi." For four years, he had piloted Snoopy One and Snoopy Two, a pair of hundred-and-thirty-foot-long blimps sponsored by MetLife, the insurance company. The Spirit of America is a hundred and ninety-two feet long, and its sides feature large electronic panels that broadcast public-service announcements and animated tire ads.

For decades, Goodyear's large silver blimps (which are now painted an odd combination of silver, navy, and yellow) ruled the skies unchallenged. Since the nineties, though, the company has had to compete for television exposure with the Lightship Group, which owns and operates the MetLife blimps and has contracts with several other companies, including Sanyo and Saturn. Lightship has put an end to Goodyear's dominance of big-time sporting events like the World Series and the Super Bowl. Even so, within the tiny airship subculture—there are fewer blimp pilots than there are astronauts—flying for Goodyear remains the most coveted job on the planet. It's been so long since Goodyear hired a new pilot in California, in fact, that the tailor who made Jon Conrad's uniforms left him alone in the fitting room for an hour while he tried to confirm that the new pilot wasn't an impostor.



Conrad eased the blimp higher into the twilit sky, then turned eastward, in the general direction of the Orange County Auto Show. "I'm learning from the masters," he said, gesturing toward Crayton, who is fifty-seven. He explained that he had also been tutored by two expert pilots, Tom Matus, who is sixty-five, and Charlie Russell, who is fifty-six. Between them, these men had ninety-one years of experience flying for Goodyear. Conrad noted that the pilots had different styles: Matus flew tail-heavy; Russell excelled at landings; and Crayton liked a little extra weight in the nose.

"It's a thinking man's craft," Conrad said. "You can make a wrong calculation about how heavy or light you want to land, and it will burn ya." The weight of a blimp, Conrad explained, is in constant flux. Starting in the early morning, the craft gains "superheat"—the difference in temperature between the helium inside and the external air. (Helium heats up faster than air.) With every additional degree of superheat, the blimp becomes twenty-five pounds lighter. When the sun goes down, the aircraft loses superheat. Since it was now evening, Conrad said, the Spirit of America had probably become hundreds of pounds heavier than it was during takeoff, when the blimp had been "fifty pounds lighter than E.Q." A blimp is at E.Q., or equilibrium, when the craft hovers steadily in the air.

Conrad radioed the ground crew. "Can you give me the surface temperature?" he asked.

"Seventy-three," came the response.

Conrad was thinking ahead to the landing. The air had cooled off, he reported, but not too much. The blimp's weight gain was probably not excessive, which meant that he wouldn't need to burn off extra fuel. A hundred pounds, Conrad said, was a preferred weight for landing; the ship would sink, but not too fast. More than eight hundred pounds would be dangerous for the ship, and for the thirteen-man ground crew, who had to "catch" the airship during landing.

"We're going to descend back down to fifteen hundred," Conrad radioed in. It took about four minutes to arrive at the lower altitude. Having grown accustomed to slowness, blimp men are the least athletic of pilots. In his short time on the job, Conrad had already developed a paunch. Crayton had an even bigger one. "That Key lime pie, it's good stuff," he said, happily patting his belly.

"The jury has found you guilty. Let's see how America voted."

Conrad meandered for another two hours. "You get there when you get there," Crayton said. "A trip may take you two hours, or it might take you five." With time to kill, Crayton reminisced at length about how Southern California had changed since he was a kid. "It was all dairy out to the ocean," he said. "Now it's all housing."

Sometime after the skies had fully blackened, Crayton raised his hand. It was time for the "weigh off," in which Conrad would perform a maneuver to determine the blimp's current weight. "Now, you want to take off the aerodynamics and slow it down as much as possible, till it's standing still, and then see how fast it falls," Conrad told Crayton. The rule of thumb is that a rate of descent of a hundred feet per minute means that the blimp is a hundred pounds heavier than E.Q. The blimp sank two hundred and fifty feet within the space of a minute, indicating that the ship was close to the ideal weight for landing.

The Spirit of America began its descent into Carson. The brightly lit Arco refinery in Carson was visible to our right. Directly below us, a diamond appeared on the landing field. The top of the diamond was white; the other points were flashing red.

"The object here is for Jon to fly into the diamond," Crayton explained, as the crewmen waved their lights back and forth below. Conrad cut the motor and glided toward the ground as if he were guiding a boat into a dock. The crewmen grabbed the two ropes that hang from the blimp's nose like a Fu Manchu mustache and pulled the airship down out of the sky. The vehicle rolled thirty yards, then stopped on its landing wheel.

John Crayton was pleased with his student. "Jon has some good, old-fashioned Midwestern characteristics," he said later, sitting in a trailerlike office that Goodyear had constructed next to the landing field. "He's meticulous. He's thorough."

Inside the office, Conrad gathered up a stack of flight manuals and prepared to head home. "I'm brushing up on blimp theory, blimp regulations, weather," he confided. "I feel pretty confident with weather—but you never know." He was nervous about the differences between the Snoopy blimps and the Goodyear airship. "I was used to one ballonet, and this has two," he said. Although this flight had gone well, he was still having difficulty keeping the ship in trim, and sometimes suffered from the wobbles during landings. "I hope that doesn't hurt me," he added.

Jon Conrad grew up next to a country airport outside Scottsbluff. When he was five years old, he used to stand by the airport fence with his dog, Laddie, and watch the planes take off; later, he would sneak onto the runways, lie on his back, and watch them land. "I always wanted to fly a crop duster, because they looked like they were having fun," he told me. Too shy to talk to the pilots, Conrad would sit in the airport waiting area and read *Rotor & Wing*. When he was about ten, he went on a summer trip out West with his family. His father took him on a helicopter ride into the Grand Canyon.

"The pilot had a beard, the cool flying shades on, his headset on—every kid wanted to have one of those headsets," he recalled. "We were flying over the trees, which looked like a lawn, and then my stomach dropped as the land below us disappeared into the Grand Canyon. It was the most amazing thing I'd ever seen."

When Conrad was nineteen, he enrolled at Emery Aviation College, in Greeley, Colorado, to become a certified helicopter pilot. Upon graduating and returning to Scottsbluff, he—like the overwhelming majority of commercial flight-school graduates—was unable to find a job. A wealthy local couple had just bought a helicopter, and they hired him to fly it. When the arrangement ended, four years later, Conrad lost the cabin that he'd been living in, and his girlfriend broke up with him. Of the hundred and fifty résumés that he subsequently sent out, he received only three responses. His first job offer involved working for someone who didn't speak English; another came from a man in South Dakota who needed someone to fuel his airplanes. The third response offered him a job flying the MetLife blimps.

"I knew the blimp had engines, we were going to travel, and these guys were going to pay for my hotel rooms—and also there was free golf, because MetLife covers golf," Conrad said. "That was all I knew about blimps." The pilot who interviewed Conrad was Marty Chandler, who hired him over the phone, and told him to report to Mesa, Arizona, immediately.

Conrad arrived at Falcon Field in Mesa at 9 A.M. on a Wednesday to see the oblong craft floating on its nose above the mast to which it was tethered—a result of thermal currents in the desert air. "I'm thinking, Oh, my God, what did I get myself into?" Conrad recalled with a chuckle. "I asked whether that happened often, and the guy on watch told me, 'Oh, yeah. Out here it happens all the time.' " He spent his first flight struggling to control the pitch of the ship as it bucked up and down on the heat currents. "To be honest with you, I was a little green, but I didn't puke," he said.

A week into his apprenticeship, Conrad flew from Arizona to California through Banning Pass, up past the Hollywood sign, and then over the Pacific Ocean—a sight comparable, he said, to the view of the Grand Canyon from a helicopter. After he had been on the job for two years, a MetLife cameraman requested him for a golfing event, the first time he had been singled out for his blimping skills. Around this time, Conrad said, he began to believe that he had found his vocation—and he decided that he wanted to fly the Goodyear blimp.

"I felt like we were Shasta and they were Coca-Cola," he said. "If we wanted to know something about blimps, we had to call Goodyear. We couldn't call the manufacturer of our blimp, because they didn't know." One of the MetLife cameramen had worked at Goodyear. "He told us that we weren't good enough to fly for Goodyear," Conrad recalled. "He beat that into us quite often—that they could do amazing things with airships."

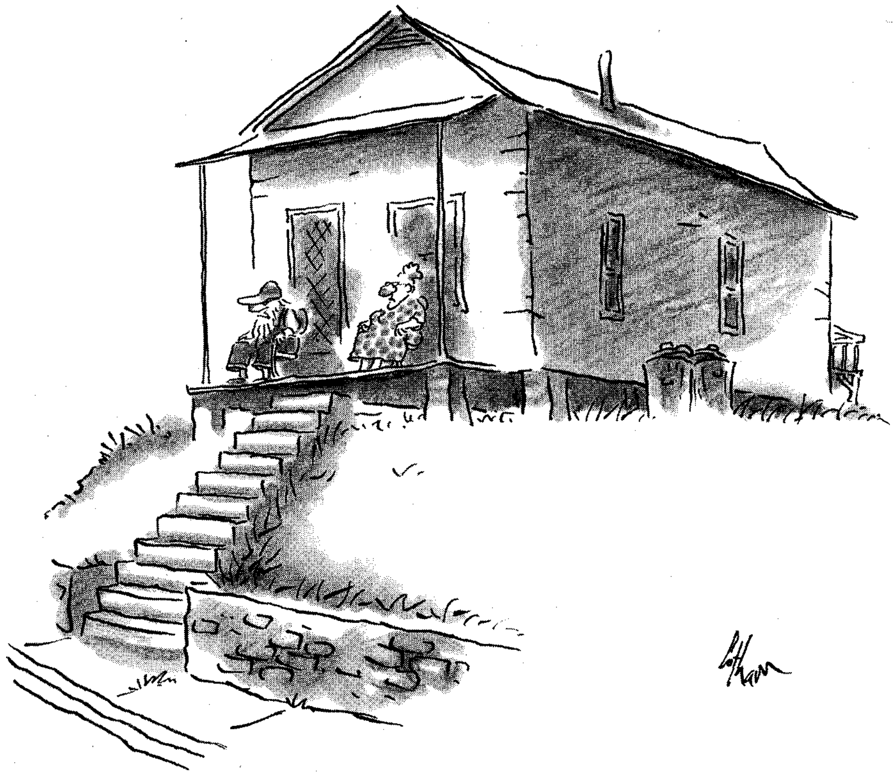
When Snoopy One spent the night at the same airfield as the Goodyear blimp in Chicago, the Goodyear crew wasn't particularly friendly. "They weren't snobbish, but they certainly suggested that they'd been around a *lot* longer than I had," Conrad said, with his habitual shrug.

Conrad started making occasional calls to the Goodyear airship-operations headquarters in Akron, asking for technical advice from Jim Maloney, a legend even among the pilots at Goodyear. "He was extremely cordial," Conrad told me. "And every time after that I talked to him he was very helpful, too."

Maloney's father, whose name was also Jim Maloney, had flown an airship for Howard Hughes before becoming a pilot at Goodyear; photographs of the singular flight of the Spruce Goose, the tycoon's flying wooden boat, show the shadow of the elder Maloney's blimp passing overhead. The young Jim Maloney was on board, and he was enchanted. Aware of the rigors of an airshipman's life, Maloney, Sr., proceeded to block every application that his son made to fly for Goodyear, from the age of sixteen on—through college, through graduate school in electrical engineering at the University of Southern California, and throughout a successful career as a university professor and an engineer. After his father died, in 1976, the younger Maloney's application was accepted.

Conrad idolized men like Maloney, and was eager to become a member of their fraternity. If he did, Conrad promised, he would never leave. "I could see myself doing this every day for the rest of my life," he said.

In 1925, Goodyear launched a promotional blimp called the Pilgrim. The company soon had a fleet of six ships, each of which appeared over the skies of America's major cities and fairgrounds.



"I credit our long marriage to Stockholm syndrome."

The fleet was the brainchild of P. W. Litchfield, the industrial genius who built Goodyear into the foremost tire company in the world. An M.I.T. graduate who grew up in Boston, Litchfield appears in photographs as a tall, dignified lord of science, resplendent in gray wool suits and rimless glasses. After joining the company in 1900, Litchfield developed and promoted many of Goodyear's most successful products, including the air-filled truck tire, the airplane tire, and the standard all-weather tire tread.

Motorized balloons were not Litchfield's invention. On September 24, 1852, Henri Giffard flew a hundred-and-forty-five-foot-long blimp with a three-horsepower engine from Paris to Trappes, seventeen miles away. In the mid-nineteenth century, a German pilot named Ferdinand Graf von Zeppelin embarked on a decades-long quest to build ever bigger airships with rigid hulls. His famous aircraft would later bomb London during the First World War.

P. W. Litchfield developed an unshakable conviction that blimps could serve as practical "land yachts" for the residents of inland states like Ohio. His commercial interest in airships began in 1910, when, as a young Goodyear executive, he travelled to the North British Rubber Company factory in Edinburgh, Scotland, and witnessed the operation of a machine that spread rubber over fabric. He bought the machine, which was built to produce tires, and had it shipped home to Akron. Back in Ohio, he became acquainted with the publicist Walter Wellman, an airship enthusiast and later a correspondent for the Washington *Record-Herald.* With its new Scottish machine, Goodyear agreed to produce the fabric for a two-hundred-and-fifty-eight-foot airship, called the Akron, for Wellman and his partner, Melvin Vaniman, who intended to pilot the ship across the Atlantic Ocean. The Akron left Atlantic City, New Jersey, on July 2, 1912, and promptly exploded, killing Vaniman and his crew. Early airships were filled with hydrogen—a gas that is twice as light as helium but is also highly flammable.

Litchfield was not deterred. During the First World War, Goodyear manufactured about a hundred airships for the military; it also sent aloft eight hundred observation balloons, many of which blew up under enemy fire. In 1919, a Goodyear blimp took off on a demonstration of the craft's peacetime potential. It erupted into flames and crashed into the roof of a bank in Chicago, killing thirteen people, including two reporters who had gone along to record the flight. A mechanic, Henry Wacker, fell to the street and, miraculously, survived.

In the nineteen-twenties, most of the American blimp industry switched from hydrogen to helium. Although helium makes up thirty per cent of the mass of the visible universe, it is difficult to obtain in bulk quantities. In the twenties, nearly all of the world's available supply of helium was in underground deposits within four hundred miles of Amarillo, Texas. The Helium Act of 1925 gave the U.S. government a virtual worldwide monopoly on the production of the gas, which it sold to Goodyear and denied to the company's German competitors. (Thirty-two billion cubic feet of the gas is now stored in an underground reservoir in Texas called the Bush Dome.)

In 1926, P. W. Litchfield became the president of Goodyear; soon afterward, he christened the Pilgrim, and began a campaign to convince Americans that blimps were the future of air travel. On September 29, 1931, a Goodyear pilot, Frank Trotter, flew an airship close enough to the spire on the Empire State Building to toss the morning papers onto the roof. The next day, Trotter returned in his airship to pick up the mail.

Trotter's two daring flights above Manhattan were the closest that America ever got to realizing Litchfield's extraordinary vision. A series of deadly airship disasters, beginning with the crash of the Shenandoah, in 1925, and culminating with the fiery explosion of the hydrogen-filled Hindenburg, in 1937, marked the end of the futurist romance with airships.

Even after Litchfield retired as president, in 1940, he clung to his convictions about the utility of airships. In his memoirs, he wrote, "Two or three reconnaissance airships, able to patrol the ocean from Alaska to Panama, might have prevented the tragedy of Pearl Harbor." The Goodyear blimp fleet survived as the sole incarnation of Litchfield's dream, diminishing slowly over the years until blimps more or less disappeared from the skies.

In 1958, a Madison Avenue executive named Bob Lane moved to Akron and took a job as Goodyear's vice-president of public relations. When he arrived in Ohio, Litchfield's fleet of six blimps had been reduced to a single, aging ship, the Mayflower, which flew over the beaches of Miami advertising Coppertone lotion for two hundred dollars a day. Lane discovered that the Goodyear management regarded the blimp as a relic of Litchfield's reign.

"They didn't realize what they had," Lane recalled. "It was like having the only sign in Times Square!" In his first few weeks on the job, Lane convinced Goodyear's board of directors that the blimp was a unique corporate icon, a floating, inflatable billboard whose odd, lumbering vulnerability could inspire wonder and yearning in children and grownups alike. He obtained permission to send the Mayflower on a six-month tour of the East Coast. Lane's hunch was right: people lined up in the streets to see the blimp, and contacted Goodyear asking for rides.

Two years later, Frank Chirkinian, a short, energetic sports director for CBS, proposed placing a camera on board a blimp to broadcast aerial images of a football game. "I had done the Orange Bowl game in '59," he recalled. "I was impressed with the shot they had taken from an airplane flying overhead, and I thought, Well, geez . . . Goodyear has a *blimp*."

Chirkinian's favorite cameraman for risky assignments was Herman Lang, a CBS regular who had endured a series of escalating torments at the hands of the director, including being placed on top of a seven-hundred-foot radio tower at the Cotton Bowl and in a hundred-and-fifty-foot crane suspended over Miami Harbor. "He always volunteered for the worst possible job, just as long as he could stay on the crew," Chirkinian remembered. "He wasn't a great cameraman by any stretch of the imagination. But he was eager. He was just what I was looking for."

The place for Herman Lang, Chirkinian decided, was inside the Goodyear blimp, taking shots of the Orange Bowl. He called Mickey Wittman, the Mayflower's publicist. "I asked him, 'Is there enough room in the gondola?' and he said yes," Chirkinian told me. "Then I asked him, 'Have you any idea what it would cost?' and he said, 'Well, we wouldn't charge you anything, as long as you took a shot of the blimp.' "

That bargain shaped the future of televised sports. A camera mounted in a blimp could help establish the physical location of an event before or following commercials, or be used to photograph formerly inaccessible places, like the back end of a golf course; the slow movement of the blimp guaranteed crisp aerial shots, and the vehicle could easily be positioned for the perfect angle on the game. All Goodyear asked for in return was "pops," occasional ground shots of the blimp accompanied by a few kind words about Goodyear tires, embedded in broadcasts of the World Series, the Super Bowl, the Final Four, and other major sporting events. The blimp reportedly gains Goodyear twenty million dollars' worth of free television exposure per year, against estimated operating costs of seven million dollars.

Although Chirkinian is grateful for what Goodyear contributed to televised sports coverage, he has never been a fan of blimps. "There's something about that big fat cow up there that does not look at all stable to me," he said. "I'm reminded of the tragedy of the dirigible in New Jersey." When I pointed out that the Hindenburg was filled with hydrogen instead of helium, he shook his head with vigor. "That image is burned in my mind forever," he said. "You can espouse all the safety factors you want, but there's something about that blimp that just *bothers* me."

Entranced by the sight of Jon Conrad practicing his takeoffs and landings on a Sunday afternoon, one visitor after another pulled off the 405 freeway and made his way to the Carson airfield. Whenever Conrad landed the blimp, the spectators responded with oohs and aahs. A few of them went inside Goodyear's blimp-operations office, a low structure on the northern edge of the airfield, to inquire about rides. Jim Wood, a Goodyear publicist, typically handles such requests. The good news is that there's no charge, he tells them. The bad news, he adds, is that blimp rides are reserved for Goodyear's corporate customers.

The walls of the trailer's modest reception area are hung with photographs, cartoons, and other mementos testifying to the blimp's place in American life. Hanging above battered, comfortable couches are framed photographs of celebrities. There are shots of Ronald Reagan, Johnny Cash, various Rose Parade princesses, Johnny Depp, and the white-helmeted daredevil Gary Gabelich, who set a world land-speed record by driving his Blue Flame race car 622.407 miles an hour on the Utah salt flats using Goodyear tires.

Outside, the ground crew was preparing Conrad for another takeoff. John Seiuli and Sean Siatuu are two big Samoans who anchor the ropes on the blimp. Seiuli said that his neighbors were always excited to see the blimp, and often asked him for rides. He told me that he had been up in the blimp only once. "At first I was nervous," he recalled. "Then it wasn't so bad."

"It's the gentle giant of the sky," Siatuu said.

Jeff Robinson, the crew chief, said that he thought Jon Conrad would make a good pilot. "He's relaxed and kicked-back," he said. "I think he'll do real well." He added with a laugh, "I've been here for twenty-three years, and he's the first new pilot I've seen, so who really knows?"

As a pilot-in-training, Conrad was not yet allowed to ferry passengers. Instead, he had spent much of the day's training session wearing "foggles," dark sunglasses with lenses that have been severely sandblasted, save for a small rectangular cutout. The lenses, which made Conrad look like the villain in a cheap sci-fi movie, allowed him to see the instrument panel but not the windshield. By restricting his view in this way, the foggles would help teach Conrad to land the blimp in heavy fog or other conditions that impede a pilot's vision.

Three men to a rope, the crew walked the ship away from the blimp mast, a thirty-foot pole in the center of the airfield. As the blimp bounced softly down the runway, the crew heaved it into the air. The maneuver, known as an "upship takeoff," provided Conrad with an additional angle of lift.

With Crayton at his side, Conrad circled the landing field. Using instruments as his sole guide, he swooped low over the field and then headed back up into the sky. At a height of a thousand feet, Crayton unexpectedly told him to take the blimp up another two thousand feet, above the afternoon cloud cover. At three thousand feet, the blimp was buffeted by an upward gust of wind. Conrad shook his head, annoyed. The blimp wobbled.

"You know you have a big wind up here," Crayton chided. "You know you have to be more aggressive."

Conrad's other problem was that the blimp was at least three hundred pounds too light, thanks to the superheat added by the ascent above the clouds; direct sunlight can make the blimp lighter in a hurry. As Conrad tried to bring the ship down low over the Links of Victoria Golf Course, which is adjacent to the airfield, the extra lift queered his approach. The blimp was so light that it felt as if Conrad were trying to force a cork underwater. The assistant crew chief, Tony Sanico, waved him off. Conrad had botched the landing. Crayton told him to start over.

Conrad retracted the blimp's landing wheel and headed into the clouds again. He circled over the 405 freeway, then returned for his second attempt. He floated momentarily over the high-voltage wires to the west of the airfield, then brought the ship down low enough for the crew to catch it. But this time he hit the ground roughly, forcing the crew to let go of the dangling ropes. Once more, Conrad retracted the wheel and pushed forward on the throttle. On his third try, the crew caught the airship's ropes, then tugged the reluctant craft toward the mast, securing it by its nose.

"I thought we were going to stay *below* the clouds," Conrad explained, after climbing wearily from the cabin. For the first time in two weeks, he looked exhausted. As he walked back down the runway, his brow was glazed with sweat.

"I should have taken off heavier than I did," he said. "I got a good workout today. I'm not a real ball of fire right now. I'm spent."

As usual, John Crayton's advice was short and to the point. "During the transition to instrument flight you were a little sloppy with your tracking," he said. "You recovered nicely. You came to your decision point. Your timing was right." Crayton paused. "Did you come back in the correct weight configuration?" he asked.

"No," Conrad said glumly.

"He's much better than when he started," Crayton said, after his student had gone off to study. He had a few doubts, however. "He hasn't quite got the smoothness yet," he said. "He still makes mistakes."

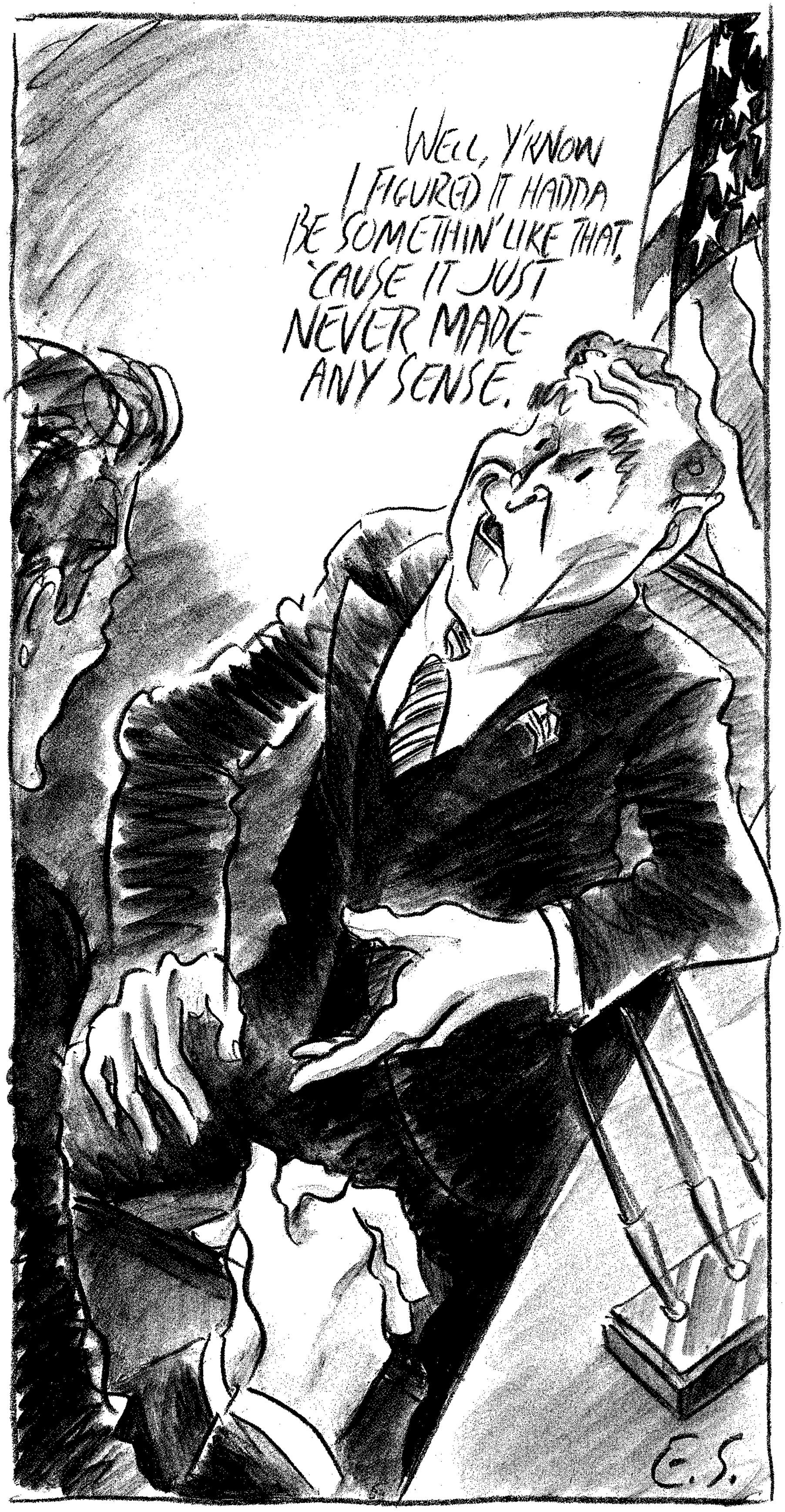
The crewmen who work with the Goodyear blimp do not think of it as an inanimate object. Forever expanding and contracting, the blimp comes to resemble a living thing. The "A-watch," which begins at eleven at night and ends at seven in the morning, is when the blimp's true personality is said to emerge. Fabian Furriel, who had been on A-watch for the past four nights, has served on the blimp crew for the past sixteen years.

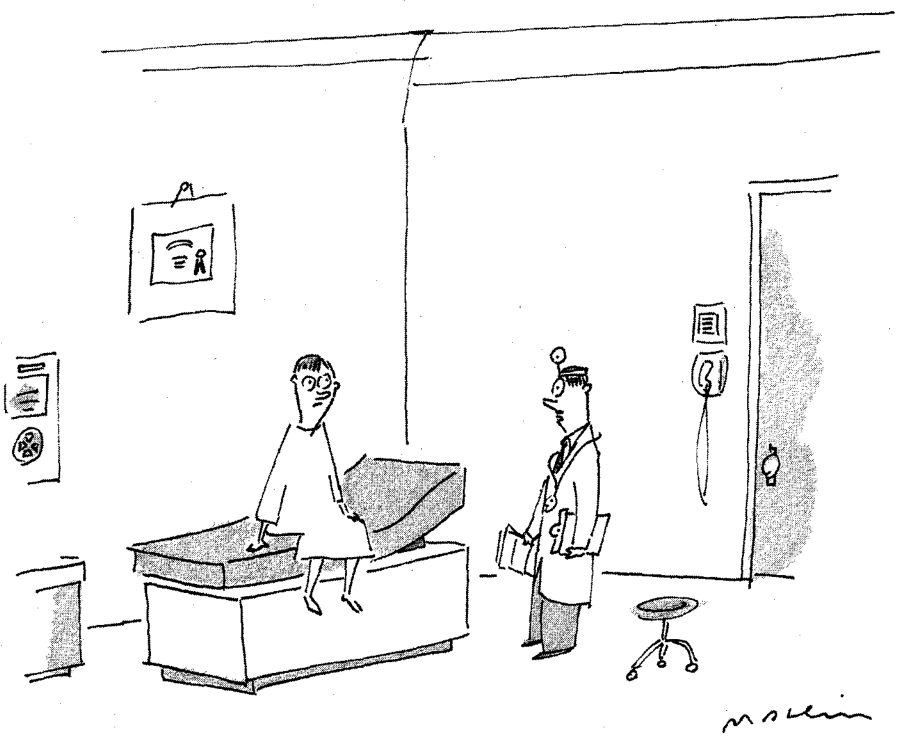
Furriel is famous among the other crew members for his peculiarities, which include the practice of wearing his Goodyear summer uniform of shorts and a short-sleeved shirt year-round, rain or shine, even in the snow. If you ask him whether he's cold, he answers back, "Define cold." Then he stares straight at you, but not in an unfriendly way. He's just intent on hearing your answer. "Define wet," he will suddenly say. "Define happy." No matter what kind of definition you give, he will then explain why your answer is wrong.

Leaving the office just after 11 P.M., Furriel walked down the field toward the airship, whose ghostly creaks and clanks echoed through the heavy fog. Under

RUMOR OF THE WEEK BY EDWARD SOREL

The Reverend Franklin Graham, Billy Graham's son, is said to have assured President Bush that the prophesy "The meek shall inherit the earth" is simply a mistranslation.


WELL, Y'KNOW I FIGURED IT HADDA BE SOMETHIN' LIKE THAT, 'CAUSE IT JUST NEVER MADE ANY SENSE.
E.S.



"I'm going to hold up a number of outstanding medical bills. Tell me how many you see."

• •

his arm, he carried the Spirit of America's immaculate logbook, which will minutely chart the craft's vital signs, hour by hour, for the next ten years or so, until its demise.

"I do a walk around the mast, check the cables, the mast junction box," Furriel said, describing how he typically began his evening routine. The blimp's envelope, he said, weighs 3,772 pounds, is made from twenty-four hundred square yards of fabric, and comes in a box that's about the size of a small van.

As the blimp slowly tracked around the mast, a rainy pitter-patter on the asphalt seemed to get heavier as the airship moved toward the patch of grass where we were standing. The blimp sheds water at night, and in the morning can often be found surrounded by a puddle of water.

For the next eight hours, Furriel stayed in constant motion while giving me a series of lectures on the operation of his favorite craft, the one thing in his life that he had ever mastered, he said.

"That yellow box, that's the handrail junction box," he said. "That gives us the main power from the mast." He resumed going down the checklist in the logbook. "You've got the pressure switch box, the blower cable, the dome light, the rectifier—that's a fancy word for a hanging battery charger," he said, barely drawing a breath as he grabbed the railing of the blimp car and swung into the cabin. "I make sure the wheel lock is installed, and the gas blower is working. That's a fan that blows air into the forward ballonet. If we have a storm and need to maintain pressure, we have the gas blower on continuously. As the outside temperature cools down, the helium cools down, and that creates a void. The void has to be filled. I like to use the analogy that the ballonets act like a pair of lungs."

Hooked up to cables, boxes, and switches, and shedding water at a furious rate, the airship at night resembled a sick whale on life support. Hanging out of the pilot's side window was a pressure switch box, which was connected to four plastic tubes that took readings from different areas of the ship: the forward ballonet, the aft ballonet, the bottom of the helium-filled portion of the bag, and the center of the leviathan's belly.

"Each hour, we take a set of readings," Furriel said. "The outside temperature. The temperature of the helium. Wind velocity. Amount of fuel aboard. The pressure settings." At midnight, the air temperature was 51°F, the helium was at 46°F, and the wind velocity ranged from zero to five knots. The ship was carrying a hundred and twenty-six gallons of fuel. The pressure was currently at 1.5 inches, Furriel explained, which meant that if a person somehow climbed on top of the blimp and jumped up and down, it would feel very much like a moon walk at an amusement park. Adjusting the switches inside the car, Furriel ran the gas blower for a couple of minutes to pump a little more air into the fore ballonet. The Spirit of America flew best slightly nose-heavy, he said.

"Life? Define a life," Furriel said, when I asked him how standing A-watch had affected his life. "I started Wednesday night, and I'll do this till Tuesday morning. I go to church. On Tuesday night, there's a men's study group."

He often dreamed about airships, he told me. "Blimpmares, that's what I call them," he said. "Most of the dreams I have are fatal to the airship." His dreams had included collisions in which propeller planes and helicopters tore through the blimp. He pointed out that in 1990 a twenty-eight-year-old man named John Moyer crashed a radio-controlled plane with a four-foot wingspan into the Goodyear Columbia, ripping a foot-long gash in the envelope. The airship was forced to make an emergency landing at the Carson airfield.

Standing in the back of the blimp cabin, Furriel stuck his head up into a giant Plexiglas bubble. A catenary curtain, which draped over the balloon and held it tightly in place, was visible as a dark scalloped swath of fabric at the top of the bag. Cables suspended from the curtain connected it to the top of the car.

At around one o'clock, Furriel climbed outside and polished the underside of the car as it slowly drifted and bounced around the mast. By 3 A.M., the air temperature had reached 49°F, and the blimp was hovering three feet off the ground. Inside the main envelope, the helium purity level was at 98.9 per cent, meaning that very little air had leaked. It costs about twenty thousand dollars to fill a blimp with helium, Furriel said. By 4 A.M., the blimp was hovering eight feet above the ground; the helium, trapped inside the insulating balloon enclosure, was now substantially warmer than the chill outside air. Furriel hauled the blimp back down and added weight by tossing four bags of lead shot into the cabin. Although he had been up with the blimp for five nights in a row, he did not complain of feeling tired. "Sooner or later, the airship takes over your life," Furriel admitted. His pride in the Goodyear fleet sustained him. "We're the best in the world," he said.

Having just completed the written portion of his Goodyear pilot's exam, Jon Conrad was being grilled on his answers by his examiners, Don Ploskunak and John Crayton. The men sat around a brown Formica table inside the office. Conrad was wearing his American-flag tie. Ploskunak, a tall man who resembles a Texas football coach, was wearing a green polo shirt and dark sunglasses.

"Do you know how shot bags are put together?" Ploskunak asked.

"Yes, a crew member showed me," Conrad answered.

Ploskunak looked down at Conrad's answer sheet, and he read the young pilot's answer about the ideal pressure for the Spirit of America's helium balloon. "You wrote, 'Pressure should be between one and two inches,' " he said. "We prefer to come in at two inches." It wasn't clear whether Ploskunak thought the difference was significant.

"You wrote down that the maximum rate of descent is one thousand feet per minute," Ploskunak continued. "Fourteen hundred is the figure we use."

Conrad protested that the figure given in the pilot's handbook was one thousand feet. Ploskunak checked the handbook. "We tested it out at fourteen hundred," he said sternly. "But the book does show one thousand." He looked down at Conrad's answer sheet again.

"Why do we hook up the rip line to the rip handle when the ship is on the mast?" Ploskunak asked.

"That way, the ship will deflate if it comes unmoored," Conrad answered.

"That way, your blimp doesn't take the mast with it and land in a cornfield somewhere in Missouri," Ploskunak teased. When Conrad was interviewing for the Goodyear job, he admitted that once, while he was piloting for MetLife, the Snoopy One had flown off its mast, travelled a hundred miles, and crashed into a barn filled with coffin linings in rural Missouri.

As the questioning continued, the scene became reminiscent of a graduate student taking general exams in a proudly esoteric subject, like Finnish grammar. Ploskunak and Conrad discussed the fine points of superheat and volleyed opinions about landing techniques. After an hour, the three pilots broke for lunch.

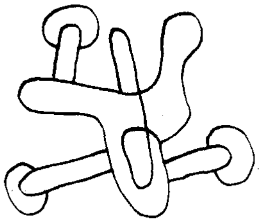
"He's got that real laid-back, lighter-than-air attitude," Ploskunak told me. "He's probably ready to fly."

In the afternoon, Conrad headed outside to board the Spirit of America with Ploskunak and Crayton. For his flying exam, he was told, he would have to do some figure eights above the local stadium, then bring the airship home.

"O.K., gang, this is Jon's big day," Crayton said, addressing the crew. The test was to last from one until four. Conrad was in the pilot's chair, with Ploskunak to his right; Crayton sat behind Conrad, offering a comforting presence. Conrad started the propellers, and the crew jerked the airship fifteen feet into the air. As the crew watched, Conrad gunned the engines, and the ship angled upward about thirty degrees and crept up into the sky with elephantine grace.

Hanging for a moment above the field, Conrad paused to retrim the ship. The nose was awkwardly high.

"If you don't do such a steep climb, you won't have to retrim," Ploskunak advised. Conrad climbed to twenty-six hundred feet. Flying over the Home Depot Center, a new soccer stadium, he expertly simulated some TV-event maneuvers, making left-hand box-pattern turns around the stadium. Then he performed figure eights.



"Ballonet blowers on, props forward, mixture's rich, slow my speed down," Conrad reported. Ploskunak took occasional notes and issued terse instructions.

"Turn left," he said.

"The nose feels like it doesn't have enough air in it, so I'm going to put some air into the nose," Conrad said, as he readied the craft for his first landing.

"You don't want to put *too* much air in the nose," Ploskunak cautioned. "You don't want to plow into the ground."

"This is my favorite part," Conrad said calmly, as the ship approached some high-voltage wires near the airfield. Coming in low amid very light winds, a pilot has comparatively little control over his craft. "I don't have anything to work with," Conrad said. For a moment, the airship hung in the air above the power lines. The cockpit was silent as the blimp made its landing approach. The ground crew broke into a trot and grabbed for the ropes, as the ship floated slowly back to earth. The landing was perfect. Crayton shook Conrad's hand.

Later, Crayton gathered the crew around the mast and made a little speech. "We welcome you to a fraternity of pilots that's seventy-seven years old," he said to Conrad, handing him a box with his silver pilot's wings—a winged Goodyear blimp. "And one more thing we have here as part of the process," he added, stepping neatly out of the way so that the crew could dump two buckets of water over Conrad's head. Conrad smiled, and then went inside to the pilot's lounge, dripping wet, to call his parents, Jack and Norma Conrad, back in Scottsbluff.

"Well, I got my wings, finally," he said.

"Well, I thought your test was tomorrow!" Jack Conrad joked. "Congratulations on that."

Conrad was already thinking about his first solo flight as a Goodyear pilot. "I can't wait to get down to San Diego and flash these babies," he said, pointing to his new wings. "As far as being a blimp pilot goes, it doesn't get any better than the Super Bowl."

Two days before the biggest sporting event of the year, the Spirit of America hovered four feet off the ground at Brown Field, in San Diego. Docked nearby were some of the blimps owned by the Lightship Group. The Sportsbook.com blimp was a third the size of the Spirit of America, and came equipped with a flame-themed paint job that would have been at home on a souped-up Camaro. Jon Conrad ambled around the field, drinking a Coke. On Sunday, he'd be flying the Goodyear blimp solo back to Carson.

All week long, the Spirit of America had been taking exclusive aerial shots for various pregame shows on ESPN. The live footage was captured by a large Gyron camera, a giant black-and-white eyeball that hung out of the blimp cabin's left door, clamped between a heavy pair of brackets. Javier Estrella, a Goodyear cameraman, beamed back dreamy, brooding shots of the city's glittering esplanade and its sports arena, Qualcomm Stadium.

Estrella would be returning to the sky that afternoon with Tom Matus, the oldest, most experienced pilot on the crew. Before takeoff, Matus stood beside the Spirit of America holding an empty bottle of Wisk laundry detergent. It was his "wickie bottle," he explained—the vessel into which he relieved his bladder while flying.

A natural charmer, Matus has the genial, boasting manner of an ex-athlete who is popular at local bars. He likes to describe himself as "the handsomest pilot." He has been flying the Goodyear blimp since 1968—before Conrad was born. An admirer of astronauts, Matus is proud to have taken Buzz Aldrin on a blimp ride. Above his desk in Carson, he keeps a signed picture from the legendary test pilot Chuck Yeager, inscribed to "The man with the 'Light Stuff.'"

Matus, who is one of the best storytellers on the crew, promptly filled me in on the origins of wickie bottles, which go back to an extra-innings Dodgers game in the nineteen-seventies. "We lost a shot in the fourteenth inning and the director was furious," he recalled. "Fourteen innings—a man's got to take a leak." He told me that he had kept the same wickie bottle for years. "When I retire," he added, "I'm going to nail that thing to a nice piece of walnut."

Matus was taking the blimp out for its final flight before Super Bowl Sunday. Bidding goodbye, he climbed into the cabin, then signalled to the ground crew for a rolling takeoff. He started low, with the crew running alongside the blimp, and lifted off, heading over the runway. The airship angled sharply upward—too sharply. The blimp was suddenly out of control. Its tail wheel smacked into the ground with the sound of tearing metal. The ship bounced once more and headed back up into the sky. Below, the crew stopped in their tracks. Carved into the grass near the runway was a twenty-foot-long scar.

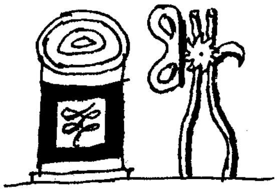
Crayton watched the accident from the ground. "He dinged the tail wheel," he said, in a worried voice.

The Goodyear blimp hung in the air like a wounded bird. The airship's rudder wasn't working properly, Matus reported by radio. With a broken rudder, the craft would be difficult to land. When the Spirit of America made contact with the ground, it bounced awkwardly.

Using the wind to push the ship sideways, the crew backed the blimp onto the mast. Steve Dien and Mike Spurlin, two mechanics, shined their flashlights on the underside of the aircraft. In addition to the dinged tail wheel, the tri-pulley for the starboard-side control cables had flipped over and needed to be flipped back into place. Matus walked across the field alone, his shoulders slumped in his Goodyear flight jacket, his wickie bottle by his side.

"The sun will shine tomorrow," he said. "It will be a better day."

On Saturday morning, however, things looked even worse for the Goodyear crew. Dien, the chief mechanic, told everyone the story of what had happened during A-watch. At 1 A.M., Dien found that a pulley controlling the upper rudder had come loose. He also discovered that a rivet had been sheared off the blimp's frame. At seven in the morning, Dien called Crayton, who called Jeff Sassano, the ponytailed chief rigger, to report that there were "major problems with the airship."



At 10 A.M., the crew reported to the field, but winds were high, making it impossible to do repairs. The bump on the runway couldn't have come at a worse time. To skip flying today not only meant the loss of another chunk of free airtime for Goodyear; it also meant leaving the skies to Saturn and Sanyo. Crayton shook his head. Later in the afternoon, he hoped, the wind would die down and repairs could proceed.

At six o'clock, the crew reassembled on the field. There was no wind. Four hours later, the field was dark and the men were still working. Goodyear's most experienced pilot had crippled the airship on the eve of the Super Bowl.

When dawn broke on Sunday morning, the Spirit of America was ready to fly. Overnight, Crayton reported, the crew had fixed mechanical problems, including the loose pulley, that usually took a few days of hangar time to resolve.

"I want to thank all you guys again," Steve Dien announced as John Crayton climbed into the blimp cabin.

The Spirit of America's readiness for flight was particularly good news this morning. Owing to security concerns about terrorism, the federal government had ordered the airspace closed within a seven-mile radius of Qualcomm Stadium, from eleven o'clock on Sunday until the end of the game. The Goodyear blimp would be able to make some game-day appearances before heading back to Carson.

Crayton took off in the direction of Qualcomm Stadium, followed closely by the Saturn and Sanyo blimps. At 10:55 A.M., with the temperature climbing, a trio of blimps floated back over the horizon. Goodyear was again in the lead. Charlie Russell, another pilot, was waiting with Jon Conrad on the ground. "Most people couldn't

LOST BROTHER

I knew that tree was my lost brother
when I heard he was cut down
at four thousand eight hundred sixty-two years;
I knew we had the same mother.
His death pained me. I made up a story.
I realized, when I saw his photograph,
he was an evergreen, a bristlecone like me,
who had lived from an early age
with a certain amount of dieback,
at impossible locations, at elevations
over ten thousand feet in extreme weather.
His company: other conifers,
the rosy finch, the rock wren, the raven and clouds,
blue and silver insects that fed mostly off each other.
Some years bighorn sheep visited in summer—
he was entertained by red bats, black-tailed jackrabbits,
horned lizards, the creatures old and young he sheltered.
Beside him in the shade, pink mountain pennyroyal—
to his south, white angelica.
I am prepared to live as long as he did
(it would please our mother),
live with clouds and those I love
suffering with God.
Sooner or later, some bag of wind will cut me down.

—*Stanley Moss*

live this way," Russell said, yawning.

"Your wind is out of the southeast, very, very light as of now," Conrad advised Crayton via radio. Conrad's former teacher steered the airship toward the landing field, as the crewmen tried to tug it down to earth. The blimp hovered thirty feet above the ground, and then started to float back into the sky.

"Let it go, let it go!" the ground chief called out as several crewmen fell onto the grass. Crayton's next three tries didn't go any better. Thanks to superheat, the ship was now at least five hundred pounds light. On Crayton's fifth pass, the crew wrestled the ship to the ground.

It was Jon Conrad's turn to fly. The flight home to Carson might take three hours, he joked, putting on his pilot's shades. Then again, it might take five.

"I need a good upship, guys," Conrad said. He checked the instrument panel and the toggles, and then gave the ground crew a big thumbs up. The crew gathered around and tossed the great rubber blimp into the air. It bounced once and headed up into the sky, with its nose at an elegant angle of twenty-six degrees. Levelling off at fourteen hundred feet, Conrad headed west; on the ground was the recently landed jet of Céline Dion, who had arrived in San Diego to sing "God Bless America."

The no-fly zone was now in effect. At 11:32 A.M. on Super Bowl Sunday, the skies over San Diego were empty. For the moment, the Goodyear blimp was the only craft in the sky. And Jon Conrad was the only pilot.

The long reflection of the afternoon sun slanting off the Pacific suggested the inspiration for countless California rock-album covers of the seventies. "The Goodyear ten-alpha is up and green—excellent job on the ground," Conrad said. He slowly steered the blimp toward the sea. At a thousand feet, you could see the waves breaking three hundred feet offshore. A plume of what looked like white smoke rushed to the water's surface, leaving a lacy filigree in its wake.

"Crayton was planning on coming back at E.Q., and he came back five hundred pounds light, and he's been doing this for thirty-one years," Conrad said when I asked him what he'd learned in his first full week as a Goodyear pilot. "That's the nature of airships. Just when you think you've got it figured out, you don't."

Conrad's legs bobbed up and down as he talked. "As a kid, I used to love watching Disney on Sunday night—a world that was just happy and peaceful—even for an hour," he said. "Well, that's exactly what it feels like up here."

Flying over the Pacific is the equivalent of highway driving; the even temperature of the ocean means there are no thermal currents to navigate, allowing the blimp to quickly pick up speed. At five hundred feet above the water, and with the wind at our back, our speed increased from twenty to thirty-four knots as the ship sailed over the flat, dark ocean, past Dana Point to Laguna Beach. The visual excitement was above us, in the clouds—the cotton-ball-like stratocumulus and, even higher, the wispy altocirrus, and the two enormous conelike cloud towers off to our right. A powerful convective lift drew moisture thousands of feet straight up into the air.

"If we saw that in the Midwest, that would tell you there might be some activity by the afternoon," Conrad explained. The skies over Carson were clear. Shifting the engines into neutral, Conrad assumed a look of peaceful concentration as he let the ship drift gently downward over the Links of Victoria Golf Course. It took about a minute to descend seventy-five feet; the ship's landing weight was perfect.

The Carson airfield came into view. Four hours after leaving San Diego, the blimp had arrived only minutes after the ground crew's truck, which had broken down twice along the way. Below, the exhausted crew were gathered around the mast, eager for an easy landing so that they could go home, see their families, and watch the Super Bowl on TV. Conrad pulled down on the right forward damper toggle to put a little more weight in the nose. He paused when I asked him for the time.

"I stopped wearing a watch once I began my association with airships," he said. "It was either that or find a new job." ♦

MAGNUM

A CRITIC AT LARGE

THE FIGHTER

Rereading Robert Lowell.

BY ANTHONY LANE

When Robert Lowell was alive, you could barely make him out beneath a forest of garlands. In April, 1947, after the publication of his second book, "Lord Weary's Castle," he was awarded both a Guggenheim Fellowship and the Pulitzer Prize. *Life* ran a feature, and a Hollywood producer called Lowell's publisher to inquire whether the poet had considered a career in the movies. (Back came the answer: He had not, but thanks for asking.) After that, there were few periods in which Lowell was not harried by fame, or by infamy, its surly younger brother. A typical encomium was this, from Hayden Carruth in the autumn of 1967, dropping to his knees in the *Hudson Review:*

> I envy Lowell. Everywhere I go among literary people I meet only others who envy Lowell. . . . Let anyone say what he will, Lowell is our leading poet. It is a fact. He has power, influence, and an enormous reputation. His books, for example, are kept in print and they sell steadily—what a joy that must be!

Ah yes, what joy. There have always been poets, Byron above all, whose lives, in the stained arena of the public mind, have fought for supremacy with their work, but in Lowell's case the struggle was unnaturally frantic, whipped along by his own reckonings of familial strife. His three marriages were cyclonic, but they were easily outnumbered, and outblasted, by his episodes of manic depression, and, more happily, by the gusts of his poetic enthusiasm. When he re-wrought Sappho, Montale, Rimbaud, Villon, Pasternak, and Baudelaire, among others, into "Imitations," in 1961, the question of whether these were responsible translations, or manglings, or—as Lowell himself wished—the minting of something new was a matter of extravagant debate. By the time he died, in 1977, at the unjust age of sixty, he had spent twenty years or more as, if not an American pontiff, then, at least, as one of the more senior cardinals of the culture. As Elizabeth Bishop, whom Lowell loved and admired, wrote, in a tribute to "Life Studies," "In the middle of our worst century so far, we have produced a magnificent poet."

Since his death, Lowell has yielded the high, commanding ground in American letters that he held during his life; in the meantime, Sylvia Plath has consolidated her position, while time has been kind to Adrienne Rich and, especially, to Bishop herself. This is not merely a change of fashion. If the shade of Lowell is no longer central to our view of poetry, that may be because poetry itself is no longer central to our lives, or, at any rate, to the way in which we reach for other voices in the quest to lend articulate energy to those lives. He is not so much a lost figure, one might say, as the last of his kind. When he worked as an informal adviser to Eugene McCarthy in the 1968 Presidential campaign, there was some mockery of what was, in essence, an intellectual companionship, but it was not thought utterly strange that a poet should consort with a power seeker. Is that still the case? If somebody of Lowell's record sought to hang out with a Democratic challenger in 2004, for instance, would the Secret Service not invite him to leave by the nearest window?

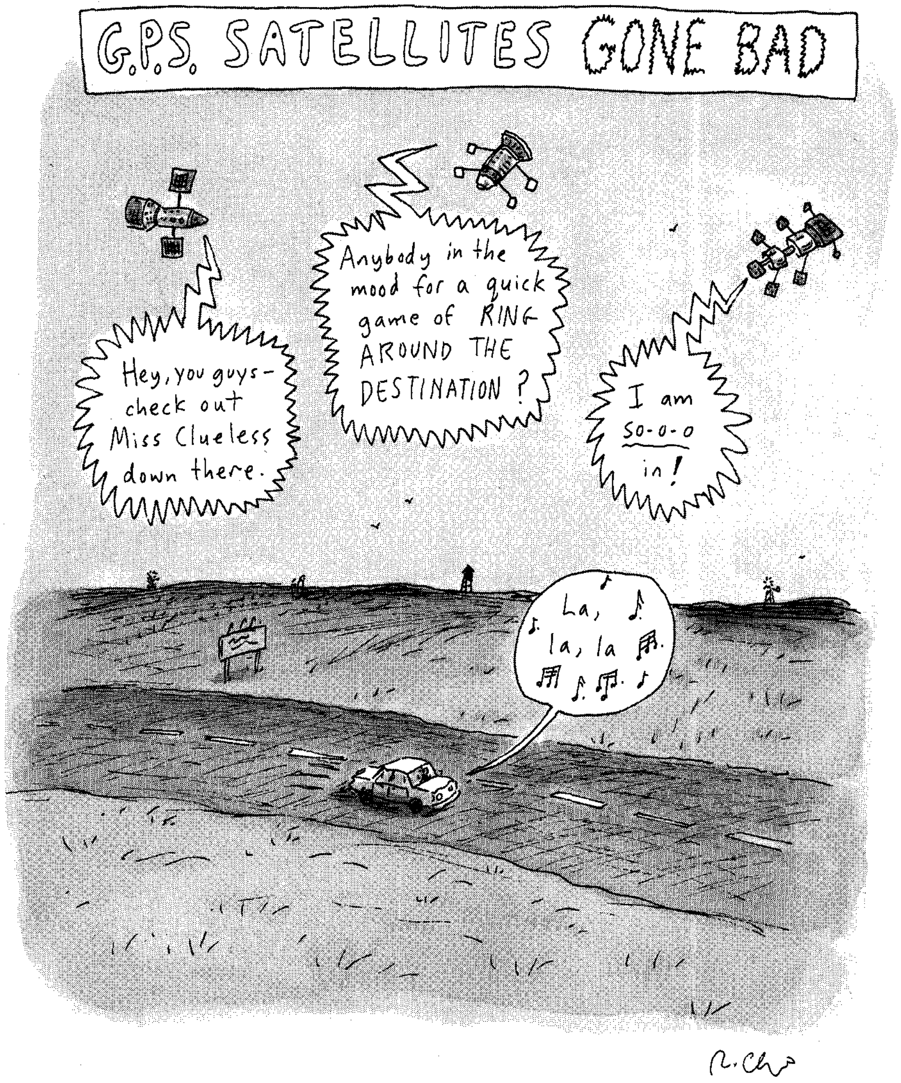
Now we have a chance to revisit that eminence. Head for the poetry section of your bookstore and look for a cuboid chunk of verbal muscle: "Robert Lowell: Collected Poems" (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $45), edited by Frank Bidart and David Gewanter. To leaf through Lowell is to undergo not a seduction but an assault. What is at issue here is not merely the thrashing vehemence of his lines, whereby even the songbirds that herald spring can be recruited to the cause of the ominous ("the forest / Is noosed in

Lowell with his daughter, Harriet, in New York City, in 1960.
Photograph by Henri Cartier-Bresson.

the ropes of shrill feathered throats"). There is also the shocking bulk of his output, all those slight volumes piling up into a corpus of Wordsworthian proportion. The running order is as follows: "Lord Weary's Castle" (1946); "The Mills of the Kavanaughs" (1951); "Life Studies" (1959); "Imitations" (1961); "For the Union Dead" (1964); "Near the Ocean" (1967); "History" (1973); "For Lizzie and Harriet" (1973); "The Dolphin" (1973); "Day by Day" (1977); "Last Poems" (1977). Then, there is "Land of Unlikeness" (1944), which Lowell never permitted to reappear in his lifetime, and which the editors reprint here as an appendix. All told, the "Collected Poems" stretches to more than eleven hundred pages.

It's a long story, and it begins in 1917—or, to be snobbish about it, sometime around the arrival of the Mayflower. Robert Traill Spence Lowell IV was born into a lesser branch of a distinguished Boston family, and from that source sprang most of his turbulent story. To put the matter at its simplest: his father, Bob, was a weak soul, never doing enough, under Boston eyes, to merit the name that sustained him, while the poet's mother, born Charlotte Winslow, was one of the implacably strong. Having hooked her man, she played him to the limits of fatigue; he was a naval officer, but she dragged him to shore and demanded that he leave the service. When he acceded, she mocked him for his acquiescence, and for the pride that he took in his job at Lever Brothers: "I think he is in love with his soap vat." Decades later, in "Life Studies," his son returned to the fray:

> He was soon fired. Year after year,
> he still hummed "Anchors aweigh" in
> the tub—
> whenever he left a job,
> he bought a smarter car.


G.P.S. SATELLITES GONE BAD
Hey, you guys—check out Miss Clueless down there.
Anybody in the mood for a quick game of RING AROUND THE DESTINATION?
I am so-o-o in!
La, la, la

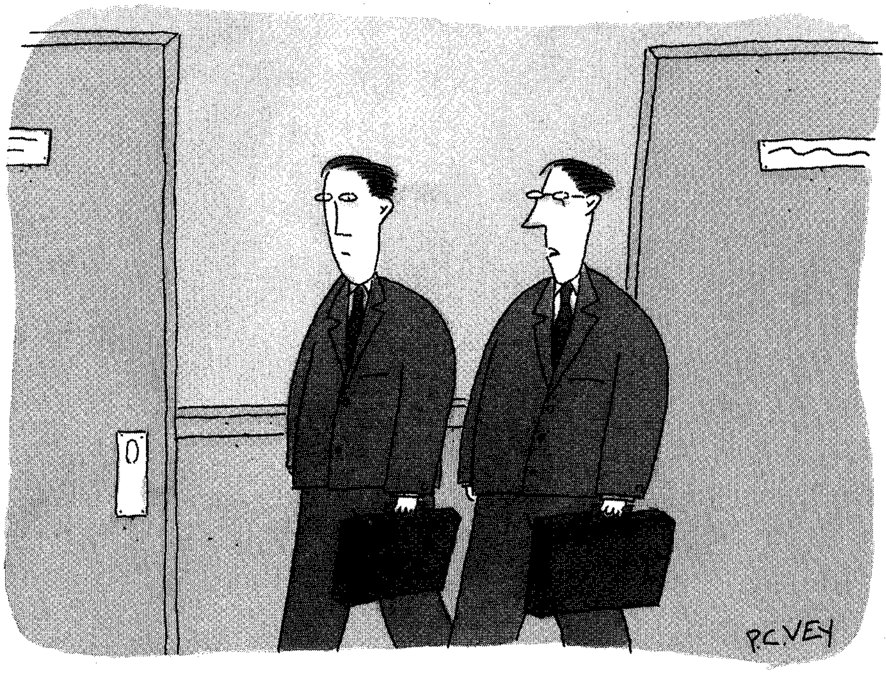
The tone of those last two lines is one of semi-sympathetic withering, as quick and chantable as a nursery rhyme, and, in "91 Revere Street," the unforgettable prose memoir at the heart of "Life Studies," Lowell tries to prize open the household of his youth. He writes, "I felt drenched in my parents' passions," and there is something both lovingly scrupulous and frighteningly stunned in his memory of their battles:

> In his forties, Father's soul went underground: as a civilian he kept his high sense of form, his humor, his accuracy, but this accuracy was henceforth unimportant, recreational, *hors de combat.* His debunking grew myopic; his shyness grew evasive; he argued with a fumbling languor.

The first thing to say about this passage is that, if Lowell was the most exacting poet of his time, it should come as no surprise to learn that his prose, too, was charged to the highest and most civilized degree. (His "Collected Prose," a gathering of reviews, interviews, and recollections of other poets, was published by Farrar, Straus in 1987.) The Jamesian weighing of the phrases, the sharply punctuated shifts of pace, the slight electric shock of the mot juste where you least expect it: that is what hits you in a Lowell sentence, and one cannot hope to pinpoint where the skills of the memoirist and critic end and the voice of the poet begins. All one can state for certain is that Lowell never ceased to learn from himself.

What he learned *of* himself is another matter. "91 Revere Street" is so evidently the work of a precisian that the casual reader, unversed in Lowell mythology, might not pick up the helpless signals of chaos—of irreversible damage—that it emits. Lowell's first and best biographer, Ian Hamilton, quotes from a draft of a memoir, in which the ten-year-old Robert asks of his timid father, "Why *doesn't* he fight back?" It is more a matter of record than of Freudian speculation to point out that, by way of compensation, Lowell spent the rest of his life fighting back. From the age of thirteen, he attended St. Mark's, in Southborough, Massachusetts, where the football coach recalled finding him underneath every melee, "as if he were defying the combined might of both teams to crush him under." He was remembered as much for his rages as for his reading, not that the two could be kept apart; if anything, his intellectual appetites had a ravenous quality that unsettled more nervous stomachs. (On summer vacation with friends, he instructed them to work their way through seventy-five plays of his choosing.) Lowell spent more than a year at Harvard, which pleased his parents, and then quit in order to write and study poetry (his verse having been shunned by the *Harvard Advocate*), which left them unamused. To their deeper discomfort, he became engaged to an older woman named Anne Dick; when his father intervened, Lowell took a swing at him and knocked him to the ground. Charlotte Lowell considered having her son confined to an institution. He was nineteen.

All this happens in the first forty pages of Hamilton's "Robert Lowell: A Biography." There are still more than four hundred pages to go, few of them touched by tranquillity. You come away from the book wrung out, stretched between pity and exasperation, relieved that you didn't have to crouch in the blast area of Lowell's existence (though regretful that you weren't in his classes, at Boston University in the nineteen-fifties and later at Harvard), and frankly amazed that any poetry at all, let alone great poetry, was able to emerge from the wreckage. At the risk of being insensitive, one must admit that, from a distance, the proliferation of mishaps slithers onto the black ice of farce. His adult progress was a juddering blend of acceleration and stallings; he switched to Kenyon College, mainly for the privilege of being taught by John Crowe Ransom, and graduated, as he wrote his mother, "summa cum laude, phi beta kappa, highest honors in classics, first man in my class, and valedictorian." He also got married, in April, 1940, to the writer Jean Stafford—an unlikely outcome, given the trials of their courtship. On Christmas Day, 1938, Lowell had borrowed his parents' car and smacked it into a wall, with his future wife sitting at his side; she spent months in the hospital with injuries to her nose and face—"bits of bone picked out from near the brain," said one friend, who sounds as if he were quoting a line of Lowell.



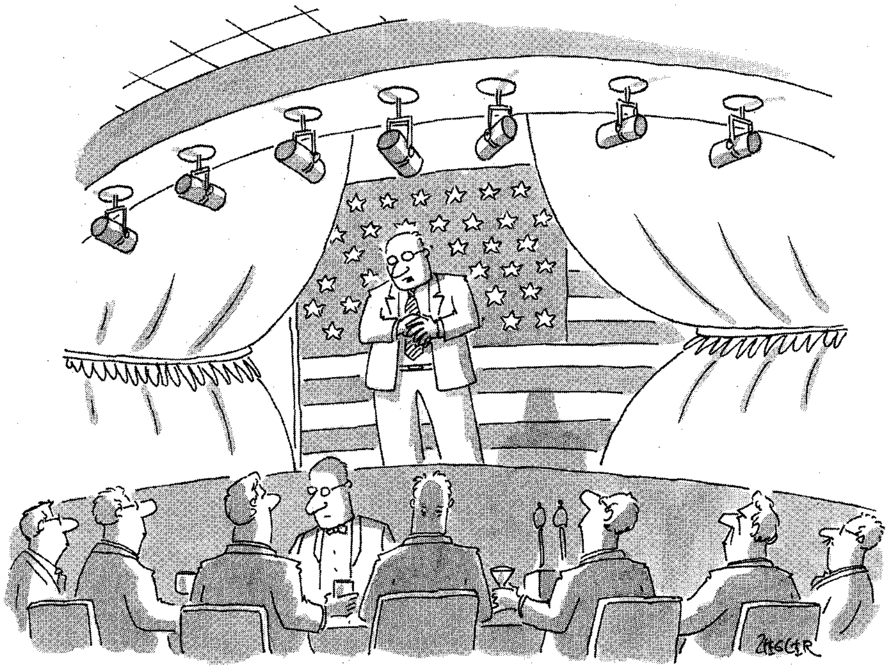
"My new business model is to ride on the coattails of somebody else's new business model."

• •

A year after marrying Stafford, he married her again. This was necessary because, in the interim, he had turned to Rome. "He picked the religion his family despised, the Roman Catholicism of their Irish maids," his cousin Sarah Payne Stuart wrote. His new faith was all-consuming, which may be the property of all true faith; the trouble was that, like other Lowell passions, it also consumed everybody else in the vicinity. As Hamilton puts it, "Mass in the morning, benediction in the evening, two rosaries a day," for Stafford as well as for Lowell. Once, on a Friday, he tasted meat stock in the soup and threw it out. This is not to knock a man for what he believed, although we should note that Lowell did eventually lapse, and that, after an affair in 1946, he declared that he was no longer a Catholic and was therefore free to divorce Stafford. What matters is the force with which the religious imperative got into and behind his earliest poetry, shoving it bullishly along a close-crammed line:

In the great ash-pit of Jehoshaphat
The bones cry for the blood of the
 white whale,
The fat flukes arch and whack about
 its ears,
The death-lance churns into the
 sanctuary, tears
The gun-blue swingle, heaving like
 a flail,
And hacks the coiling life out: it
 works and drags
And rips the sperm-whale's midriff
 into rags,
Gobbets of blubber spill to wind and
 weather,
Sailor, and gulls go round the stoven
 timbers
Where the morning stars sing out
 together
And thunder shakes the white surf
 and dismembers
The red flag hammered in the
 mast-head. Hide
Our steel, Jonas Messias, in Thy side.

You can taste the salt of Melville in this excerpt from "The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket," as you can the influence of Hopkins, whose "inebriating exuberance" Lowell had lauded in an essay of 1944 (a year before parts of "Quaker Graveyard" were published, in *Partisan Review*). What lives in the verse is the physical rending, and rendering, of fat and guts. The swaying energy—and already there was not much that any living poet could teach Lowell, not yet thirty, about the pulse of an iambic pentameter—falters only in that final couplet, as he reaches toward Calvary. You sense that, where Hopkins was fired with spiritual intensity, Lowell *wanted* to be fired—to strike the attitude that other



"How about one more round of 'God Bless America' before we bring out the naked broads?"

believers had struck before him and ardently hope for the best. It was not cynically done; rather, the striving is that of an incredibly serious child, and readers could be forgiven for thinking that Lowell, the coming man, played as ferociously with God as the infant Robert had played with his toy soldiers.

Other influences flow into these early poems. There can be little doubt that Lowell was chafed and heated by his contacts with John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, and by the polemical thrust with which they—in their capacity as Southern Agrarians, and in the group that clustered around *The Fugitive* magazine—enforced their poetic and political faiths. What Lowell got from Tate, whom he met when he drove South, in 1937, was the thrill of being informed that poetry could be burly and unwhimsical, that it should agree to no treaties of fair play, that it must, as he said in homage to Tate, "be tinkered with and recast until one's eyes pop out of one's head." But excitement, one should add, was as far as the relationship went. The flame of Agrarianism, with its flickerings of racism, left the Bostonian unsinged: "I, too, was part of a legend. I was Northern, disembodied, a Platonist, a puritan, an abolitionist." Read the two men on the cemeteries that house their respective countrymen:

Row after row with strict impunity
The headstones yield their names to the element,
The wind whirrs without recollection;
In the riven troughs the splayed leaves
Pile up, of nature the casual sacrament
To the seasonal eternity of death;
Then driven by the fierce scrutiny
Of heaven to their election in the vast breath,
They sough the rumour of mortality.

Thus Tate, in "Ode to the Confederate Dead." Compare Lowell, "In Memory of Arthur Winslow":

O fearful witnesses, your day is done:
The minister from Boston waves your shades,
Like children, out of sight and out of mind.
The first selectman of Dunbarton spreads
Wreaths of New Hampshire pine cones on the lined
Casket where the cold sun
Is melting. But, at last, the end is reached;
We start our cars. The preacher's mouthings still
Deafen my poor relations on the hill:
Their sunken landmarks echo what our fathers preached.

Something has happened to American poetry here, and not just across the geographical divide. Between the Tate of 1937 and the Lowell of 1943 there lies a period of shriving, of renouncing the poetical bray ("the seasonal eternity of death") for the sound of people starting their cars. "The stones are yellow and the grass is gray," Lowell says elsewhere in the poem, like a child reporting the obsequies on a postcard home.

One advantage of the "Collected Poems" is that patterns coalesce in front of your eyes. Take the whale and the white surf that pound through "The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket." What they herald is a lifelong, near-fetishistic drift toward the marine and the submarine, as if in blurred remembrance of Lowell's father, the failed sailor. In "Life Studies," there is Stanley, the poet's fellow-inmate on a psychiatric ward, "a ramrod / with the muscle of a seal / in his long tub." There is the "raw-jawed, weak-fleshed" salmon that opens "Near the Ocean." And then, of course, there is an entire volume called "The Dolphin," which begins with a poem entitled "Fishnet" and even finds room for a mermaid—"I spout the smarting waters of joy in your face." Lowell seems to have clung to the image of finding or fighting one's way through a difficult medium. Salmon, seal, and whale plow their respective waters much as the poet wrestles a path through the inherent, half-yielding toughness of the language.

The trouble, for those close to Lowell, is that he treated experience in the same way. Jean Stafford recalled "that awful summer" of 1946, in Maine, when "every poet in America came to stay with us." By night, the poets drank and read their poems aloud; by day, Stafford said, "I'd cook and wash the dishes and chop the ice and weed the garden and type my husband's poems and quarrel with him." One comes away from the Hamilton account of Lowell's life with the sense that everything had to be made hard—what was the point of mild assent when resistance was the more testing alternative? In 1943, he had refused the draft, writing to President Roosevelt and appending a "Declaration of Personal Responsibility." He was sentenced to a year and a day at a correctional center in Danbury, Connecticut. (The same radical urges sur-faced almost a quarter of a century later, when he addressed a draft-card demonstration in Washington, an event commemorated in Norman Mailer's "Armies of the Night.") All of which should place Lowell as a conscientious liberal, whereupon we find him at the Yaddo artists' retreat, in 1948, mounting a mysterious campaign of vilification against the organizer, whom he accuses of being a Communist agitator. Once again, he is nosing upstream, against the current.

It was at Yaddo that he met Elizabeth Hardwick, who in 1949 became his second wife; she was too substantial a presence and too good a writer to be merely long-suffering, but she certainly suffered longer and more patiently than most. In the spring of 1949, after a period of tightening psychological tension, Lowell had what he called "an attack of pathological enthusiasm . . . . I ran about the streets of Bloomington Indiana, crying out against devils and homosexuals." After picking a fight with a cop, he was arrested, straitjacketed, flown to a private hospital in Massachusetts, given electric shocks, engaged to Hardwick, then released, married, and, finally, after a brief honeymoon at the house of the literary critic F. W. Dupee, assigned to the Payne Whitney Clinic for psychiatric treatment. This was Lowell's first, though not the worst, occurrence of manic depression; he would suffer the terrible onset of the "old menacing hilarity," as he called it, in cities as far-flung as Salzburg and Cincinnati, and at one point Hardwick counted four episodes in four and a half years.

One outcome of that period was "The Mills of the Kavanaughs," a collection of dramatic monologues, which appeared in 1951. "I had poured every variety of feeling and technique into it," Lowell commented, and the overflow is close to unreadable. Set now amid the splendors of his other books, "The Mills of the Kavanaughs" may strike us as his weakest work, not, heaven knows, in its technical prowess but in its strange frailty of purpose, with Lowell scrabbling from one monologue to the next. There is little sense that he is willing, like Browning, to slip inside his characters. Rather, you can feel Lowell straining to conjure, as if by prodigious alchemy, a fictional speaker who will allow him to express what he most pressingly wishes to say. He had something to declare, and the next move was, in retrospect, the obvious one. He gave it to us straight.

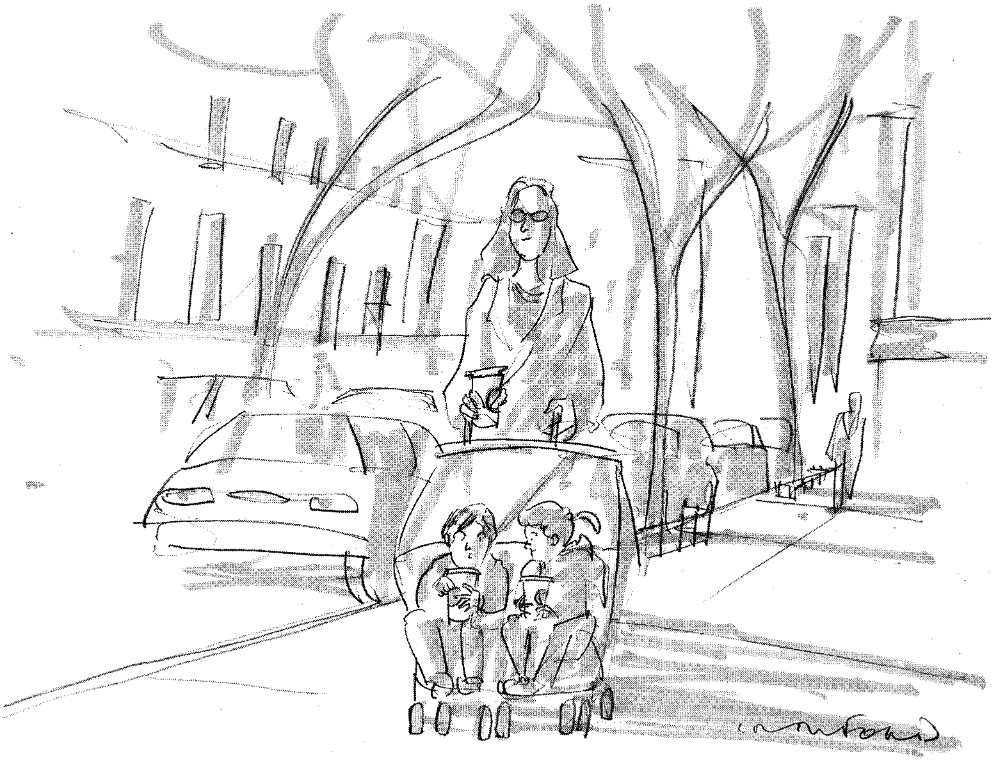
The shift was so momentous that it took him the best part of a decade to accomplish. Between "The Mills of the Kavanaughs" and "Life Studies," the Lowells lived in Rome and Amsterdam, among other places, each of them tempting the poet toward a shift of identity; "Poor dear, he's got it into his head that he's a strong, simple and capable man of the people, like a Dutchman," Hardwick wrote. Harriet, their daughter, was born back in Boston, in 1957. Lowell lost his mother, and flew to Europe, where she had been travelling, to bring her body home from Rapallo, "wrapped like *panettone* in Italian tinfoil"; he lost his heart to many young women, as if determined that a poet should fall regularly in love; and, again and again, to the despair of his wife, he lost his mind. Yet the poems, many of which record this fragmentation, move in the opposite direction. Shedding his histrionic costume, Lowell went from this, in "The Mills of the Kavanaughs," supposedly intoned by a Canadian nun,

> I feel you twitch my shoulder. No one hears
> Us mock the sisters, as we used to, years
> And years behind us, when we heard the spheres
> Whirring *venite*; and we held our ears.
> My mother's hollow sockets fill with tears.

to this, from "Life Studies," unequivocally spoken by Robert Lowell:

> Father and Mother moved to Beverly Farms
> to be a two minute walk from the station,
> half an hour by train from the Boston doctors.
> They had no sea-view,
> but sky-blue tracks of the commuters' railroad shone
> like a double-barrelled shotgun
> through the scarlet late August sumac,
> multiplying like cancer
> at their garden's border.

At first, this stanza, from "Terminal Days at Beverly Farms," may sound flat, but listen closely to the half-rymes of "sea-view" and "sky-blue," of "cancer"



"She thinks I think it's real latte, but I know decaf when I taste it."

and "border," and ask yourself if there is not something wide-eyed and paranoid in its clarity of detail—cancer *and* shotgun within three lines? Lowell primed himself for "Life Studies" in different ways. For one thing, he toiled at a prose autobiography, part of which resulted in "91 Revere Street." (More is reprinted in the "Collected Prose.") Then he chopped at the knotted material of those memories and came away with verse that feels at once splintered and polished. "Life Studies" is almost nostalgic for unhappy days; the poet knew that, in spite of everything, they had made him what he was, and he took it as a challenge to remaster the untidy growth of his childhood, as one would cut back roses or weeds. Carefully, and to lethal effect, the poet splices recollections of his mother, and of the menfolk who populated his youth, with accounts of his own incarcerations, and of the unfortunates, such as "A Mad Negro Soldier Confined at Munich," who shared his debility of mind. Lowell is too sophisticated an artist to enforce the connection, or to apportion blame, but everywhere the dire implication leaks through the cracks in the verse: I was raised by these people, and now I am in the depths.

The result was to become known—it remains Lowell's most celebrated work—as an early example of "confessional" poetry. (The term was coined by the critic M. L. Rosenthal in a review of "Life Studies.") Lowell, one suspects, would have been appalled by the recent growth in the self-revelation industry, whose principal criteria, whether on TV or in memoirs of abused childhoods, are earnestness, wild sanctimony, and faux transparency. For he was not in the business of the shapeless blurt. His business was the making of art, and to trace the pattern of his autobiographical verse, from "Life Studies" up to "Day by Day," is to watch a man breaking and remaking the mold in which the soft mass of his experience—his adventures in sensation and dread, as well as his erudition—may be poured. It would be gross to claim that he warped and wounded his life, and the lives of others, in order to nurture his poetry. He was the genuine victim of psychological vastation, not a fraud. Equally, though, he found nothing in that life which he could not use, or reuse, within a line of verse; his troubles were *trouvailles*.

To students of poetic mechanism, then, this huge new volume will be an indispensable handbook. The forms loosen, flex, and grow taut again. While reading his work in public—especially on the West Coast, home of the Beat poets—Lowell started adding syllables or simplifying lines as he recited, and the boldness of that ease found its way first into "Life Studies" and then into the hundreds of sonnets that litter the later books. He was a wonderful reader of his own work; get hold of his recordings in the Voice of the Poet series (Random House; $15.95), and you will hear that the hard, clacking consonants in which he specialized ("*Tockytock, tockytock* / Clumped our Alpine, Edwardian cuckoo clock") grow less obtrusive on Lowell's own tongue. He apparently acquired his Southern accent early, from Tate and from Robert Penn Warren, with whom he worked at the *Southern Review*, in 1940, as well as from the Kentuckian Hardwick, and the long vowels, once grafted on, became part of his natural speech. For all his frenzies, there was much gentility, and gentleness, in Lowell (his eulogies of dead acquaintances, such as T. S. Eliot and Delmore Schwartz, are ineffably fond and fair), and the sound of him may tell us more than the sum of his misdeeds. There was much to enrage him, yet the poetry is not livid with scorn. He is far less scathing than Sylvia Plath, say, whose poems are literally the most hateful of her generation, boiling with resentment not only at her father but even, unforgivably, at her own child ("look at her, face down on the floor, / Little unstrung puppet"), whereas Lowell keeps taking the reader aback with flushes of tenderness, as in this bath-time address to Harriet: "Dearest, I cannot loiter here / in lather like a polar bear." If Lowell had chosen the stage, what a Lear he would have made.

The part of the "Collected Poems" that I treasure most is the Lowell of the nineteen-sixties: "Imitations," "For the Union Dead," and "Near the Ocean." These volumes maintain a marvellous poise, alive to the pressures of the age yet refusing to cave in or dwindle into a rant. If anything, Lowell, a devotee of Virgil, Horace, and Propertius, hit upon a tone—a buoyant classical sternness—that had scarcely been heard since the eighteenth century. Somehow, he alone seemed qualified to capture the decade's mixture of light-footed private desires and dark public soothsaying, and to convey the urgency of both in lines as terse and insistent as a newspaper headline:

O to break loose. All life's grandeur
is something with a girl in summer . . .
elated as the President
girdled by his establishment
this Sunday morning, free to chaff
his own thoughts with his bear-cuffed
staff,
swimming nude, unbuttoned, sick
of his ghost-written rhetoric!

No weekends for the gods now. Wars
flicker, earth licks its open sores,
fresh breakage, fresh promotions,
chance
assassinations, no advance.
Only man thinning out his kind
sounds through the Sabbath noon,
the blind
swipe of the pruner and his knife
busy about the tree of life . . .

This is Lowell at his most sure, the couplets marking time to his sad magniloquence. The poem, "Waking Early Sunday Morning," appeared in "Near the Ocean," in 1967. An earlier version, with a different arrangement of stanzas, had run in the *New York Review of Books*, on August 5, 1965. At the back of the "Collected Poems," we get a chance to consult that version, and the editors duly discuss the comparison in their introduction. What they don't do, however, is direct us back to even earlier drafts, some of which are quoted in the Hamilton biography:

I cannot take it. One grows sick
of stretching for this rhetoric,
this hammering allegoric splendor,
top-heavy Goliath in full armor.

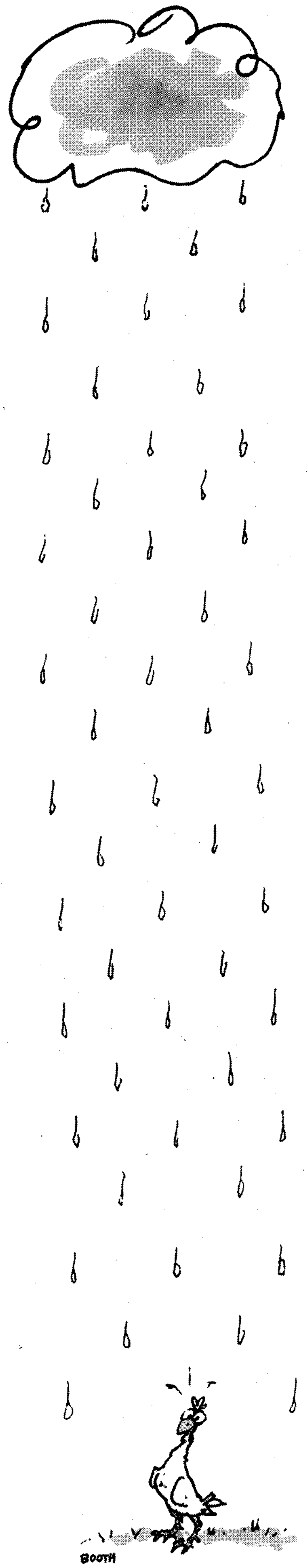
This is an astounding moment, in which the poet accuses *himself* of overreaching; his efforts at grandeur are as fraught, and maybe as doomed, as those of the Presidential speechwriters. Some of that diffidence does seep through to the poem's final form, proving that Lowell was too self-questioning to be a satirist, let alone a political carnivore. Even as his life shook with near-lunacy in the spring of 1965 (a few months before he wrote the poem, another breakdown landed him in the hospital), the demands of poetry granted Lowell a moral formality—dare one say, a sanity—that eluded his grasp as a quotidian being. That summer, in protest against the bombing offensive in Vietnam, he had refused to attend a White House Festival of the Arts, a stance that made the front page of the *Times*. If, however, you actually read his open letter to Lyndon Johnson, it sounds Augustan in its tempered declaration of principle: "Although I am very enthusiastic about most of your domestic legislation and intentions, I nevertheless can only follow our present foreign policy with the greatest dismay and distrust." Eric F. Goldman, who was appointed to run the show, wrote, of speaking to Lowell, that "I hung up the telephone with the impression of a fine human being. I also hung up with the feeling that all hell was about to break loose." Note the unconscious gesture to a recurring Lowell phrase: "O to break loose . . ."

Is it naïve to ask that the "Collected Poems" should have found room to demonstrate the evolution of this crucial poem? The book is already more than eleven hundred pages long. Any concerted attempt to expand it into a variorum and it would have exploded. But where else are we to find such material? The dilemma becomes pronounced, and painful, as we head toward the chaotic bibliography of the later Lowell. "A Note on the Text," at the front of the book, makes a startling announcement: "The most radical editorial decision was the earliest made—to print *History* rather than *Notebook*." Well, hang on here. "History" is not an alternative to "Notebook"; it is one of the two collections of sonnets, the other being "For Lizzie and Harriet," into which "Notebook" was distilled. (And even "Notebook" exists in two editions, one published in 1969, and the second in 1970, neither of them printed here.) It was Frank Bidart himself, one of the editors of the present volume, who once sat across the room while the poet dictated changes, splitting up the "Notebook" poems and assigning them new homes. Broadly, poems on historical figures and themes, from Ulysses to Robert Kennedy, slid into "History," while the more domestic poems went into "For Lizzie and Harriet." To take one example:

I have been in the sun, and my lips keep twitching—
suddenly, no disinclination to murder—
these brown hours, they stream like water off my back.
I want to charge with bull-horns through the cedar hedge,
pretending left and right and wrong are wind. . . .
O to live in a small gone Horatian suburb
lost in its melancholy stream of traffic—
all for goodness, we both on in years. . . .
mischievous fish-shapes without scale or eye
swim your leaf-green teagown, not maternal,
swirling six inches past your three-inch heel,
belling about you like a parachute—
Otello bellowing, the rug rolled up, a spate
of controversial spatter . . . then exhaustion.

This poem, "Alcohol," may not be great Lowell, but it is typical of Lowell at the time. Readers will be either deflated or amused by that final line—by the way in which the last syllable of "exhaustion" adds a fittingly dead beat to the pentameter. For a full understanding, though, you must turn back to the 1970 "Notebook" and find a similarly titled poem, which begins, "Suddenly, no disinclination to murder," a line that *ends* the even earlier version in "Notebook 1967-8." The one triumphant progression runs from the "Notebook" phrases "I would stop and sun" and "I live in the sun" to the roasted, end-of-day tiredness of "I have been in the sun," which allows the final version to open with such menacing calm, and which summons the vengeful ghosts of Hamlet ("I am too much in the sun") and also, perhaps, of Macbeth ("I gin to be a-weary of the sun"), whose own disinclination to murder was swiftly overcome.

What are we dealing with here: improvements, or pedantic smudgings? One's opinion surely changes not just from poem to poem but from phrase to phrase, and, if Lowell's tendency to pick the pocket of one of his own poems, the better to line another, became an insurmountable compulsion,



GEORGE BOOTH

then we might at least have been offered the opportunity to watch the thief at work. One option might have been to do as the Belknap Press did with the poems of Emily Dickinson: to produce both a multivolume edition, bulky with variants, to be used by libraries and specialists, and a "Reading Edition," a clean recension of all that labor, ideal for the unfanatical fan. The trouble is that, once a limited project like the Farrar, Straus Lowell enters the market, it makes the prospect of a fuller edition all the more unlikely; who will have the means, or the stamina, to start over?

For the foreseeable future, therefore, Lowell-lovers must make do with what they have; and that, one hastens to add, is a great deal. There is an unexpected, nineteenth-century doggedness to Lowell's endeavors—we see him worrying away at himself (indeed, at the whole notion of a self as it creaks, collapses, or hardens over time) with the same stubbornness, and the same unerring touch for metrical stops and starts, that we associate with Wordsworth. (Lowell, surveying his poetic achievement in 1976, labelled it "a small-scale *Prelude*.") Whether such resilience means that the "Collected Poems" will bring new readers to Lowell is another matter, and one is forced to ask what kind of taste his poetry requires in an audience.

I suspect the presence of a hideous irony: Lowell's reputation has been sucked back, quite unfairly, into the moneyed snobberies of his upbringing. The very thing that he kicked against, in his art as in his conduct, has returned to haunt him, and what a young student of today would note in Lowell's stand against the draft in the Second World War would be not the courage of his radicalism but the fact that it was, as a matter of course, reported as a public event. ("Lowell Scion Refuses to Fight," the Providence *Journal* said; "Socialite's Mother to Uphold Son," the Boston *Post* said.) And it was Lowell himself who oversaw that process, writing to Roosevelt to explain his un-Lowellish behavior. He seems rarely to have doubted that the saga of his family was of defensible interest, and that it endowed him with an automatic prerogative—a claim on the public eye and ear to set alongside those of his antecedents Amy and James Russell Lowell. Elizabeth Bishop, as ever, was frank:

> I am green with envy of your kind of assurance. I feel I could write in as much detail about my uncle Artie, say,—but what would be the significance? . . . Whereas all you have to do is put down the names! . . . In some ways you are the luckiest poet I know!

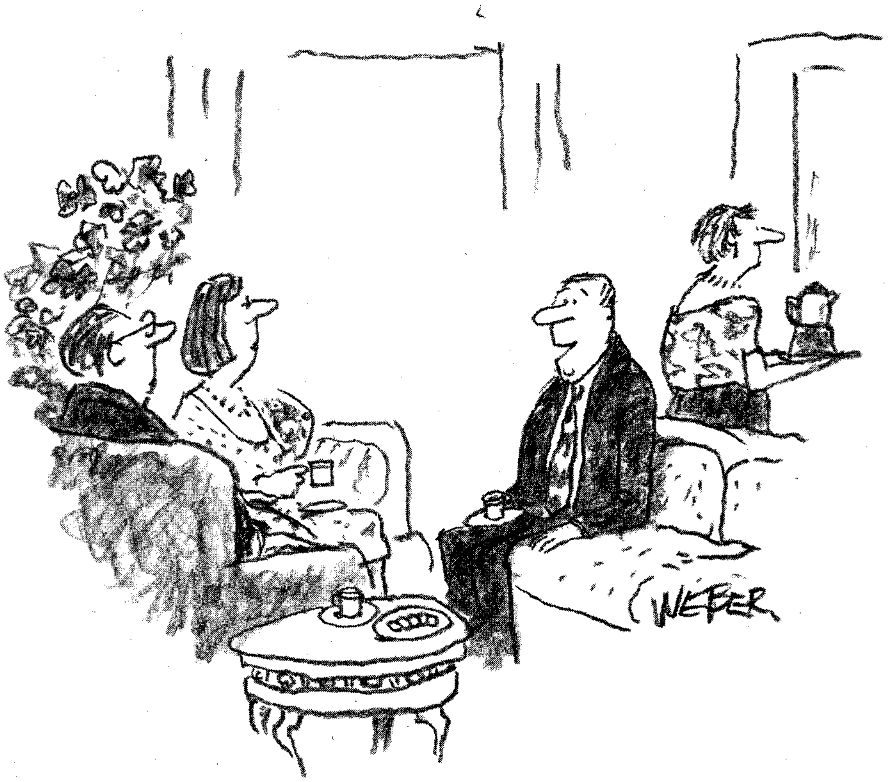
Lowell rode his luck, and it was quite a ride. That is why, from "Life Studies" through "History," he wrote of Roman emperors, or of canonical European poets, with the same urgent, hand-on-your-shoulder intimacy that he devoted to his uncle or his grandfather, and why he was so gratified by Cal, the nickname that he acquired at school, and that he never sought to drop. (It stood for Caligula, with, apparently, a dash of Caliban: forceful figures, not noted for their restraint.) The reliable high of the past, whether immediate or distant, combined with the vertigo of Lowell's mental swings to provide all the stimulus that he required, and from that we can trace what he called the "jerky graph of the heart."

Starting in 1967, Lowell took lithium, as it became available, to attempt some reconnection with the manageable world. In truth, the world was almost beyond him. What does one say about a man who, having needed six men to strap him into a straitjacket in the corridor of a Buenos Aires hotel, was then accompanied by a doctor to the United States, though not before demanding to leave the plane in Paraguay so that he could stay with, and marry, the flight attendant with whom he had just fallen in love? Or, more hurtfully:

> What does one say about a poet who, having left his wife and daughter for another marriage, then titles a book with their names, and goes on to appropriate his ex-wife's letters written under the stress and pain of desertion, into a book of poems nominally addressed to the new wife?

That is from Adrienne Rich, in a memorable slaughtering published in *American Poetry Review*, in 1973. The poet is Lowell, the book is "The Dolphin," the ex-wife is Elizabeth Hardwick, whom he divorced in 1972, the new one is the writer Lady Caroline Blackwood, whom he married in Santo Domingo the same year, and the only possible answer to Rich's question is: Give it time.

The saga of Lowell's third marriage was no more pacific than that of the



"Did I say Henny Youngman? I meant to say Sergei Prokofiev."

first two. Lady Caroline, of highborn Irish stock, had been married twice already, first to the painter Lucian Freud, then to the composer Israel Citkowitz. She and Lowell had a son, Sheridan, who was born in 1971. They lived much of the time in England, partly because of her apprehensive belief that America was more likely to set Lowell off, like a firework. (“At Harvard it was always touch and go,” she said, although England was itself the scene of many crises.) “The Dolphin” was his homage to her, and maybe it took somebody as driven as Lowell to proceed on the assumption that only the poetry mattered, and that whatever offense it might cause could be ignored as a side effect. The annoying and rather chilling fact is that he turns out to have been right. Thirty years ago, when the insult to Hardwick was still fresh, “The Dolphin” may indeed have struck most onlookers as what Rich called “bullshit eloquence.” But we are fortunate, because much of the bullshit has washed away, and we are able for the first time (and our grandchildren will be still better placed) to weigh the eloquence for ourselves. And what we hear is the wheezing amazement of middle age—clotted, tetchy, hung over—as it enters the hilarious presence of love:

> Where will you take me in the fizz of winter?
> Darling, the cork, though fat and black, still pulls,
> new wine floods our prehistoric veins—
> the day breaks, impossible, in our bed.

This is not small-minded or unkind. It is momentarily large of soul, and—unlike much of Lowell, who seldom shared the instinctive capering of his antic friend John Berryman—it verges on the funny. Together, Lowell and Berryman, who unquestionably lead the poetic parade of the postwar years, had the gall to gaze in the mirror and see whole continents there, and they realized, as Saul Bellow and Philip Roth continue to realize, that capaciousness (the long sentence, with its comic diversions, or the rolling run-on of the pentameter) would be their most promising path—their only plausible means of dealing with the vastness of what America meant to them. Lowell alone went further, and dared to wonder aloud how much he had meant, and would mean, to America. She was his longest love, as well as his angriest, and one line from his translation of Juvenal, whether it refers to a household or a bombing campaign, hits home: “Devoured by peace, we seek devouring war.”

• •

One so wants to peel these “Collected Poems” away from the flesh of Lowell’s own tribulations, but he made the task too delicate. Only in death, perhaps, was the process of separation allowed to start: “the immortal / is scraped unconsenting from the mortal,” as he wrote in his wonderful final volume, “Day by Day.” The book jabs with short, sharp lines at his failing powers, and at the endlessly pained wranglings, whether sexual, spiritual, or aesthetic, of his friends and fellow-writers, who by now were falling around him as if in battle:

> My unhealthy generation—
> their lives never stopped stopping,
> with ursine step,
> one foot bleeding,
> without a crutch—
> snapdragons,
> half-amiable and gallant . . .

The outcome of these probings is more sorrowful than indulgent, rising from rueful meditations on youth (“the slender iron rungs of growing up”) to a codger’s sullied complaint (“Age is the bilge / we cannot shake from the mop”) while taking time to pose the old, room-silencing questions:

> Is getting well ever an art,
> or art a way to get well?

Neither, one regrets to say. Lowell was never well, and his art was healthier by far than its creator. “Obviously spoiled by everyone for years, he seemed nonetheless to need the spoiling,” Norman Mailer wrote, after they marched and spoke together in 1967. “Lowell’s fine grace was in the value words had for him, he seemed to emit a horror at the possibility of squandering them or leaving them abused.” If that is what has been handed down to us in the “Collected Poems,” well, few legacies could be more enriching. Lowell died of heart failure in 1977, in the back of a New York cab, clutching a brown paper parcel. We all have our way of breaking loose. ♦

FICTION

THE FOLKLORE OF OUR TIMES

BY HARUKI MURAKAMI

I was born in 1949. I started high school in 1963 and went to college in 1967. And so it was amid the crazy, confused uproar of 1968 that I saw in my otherwise auspicious twentieth year. Which, I guess, makes me a typical child of the sixties. It was the most vulnerable, most formative, and therefore most important period in my life, and there I was, breathing in deep lungfuls of abandon and quite naturally getting high on it all. I kicked in a few deserving doors—and what a thrill it was whenever a door that deserved kicking in presented itself before me, as Jim Morrison, the Beatles, and Bob Dylan played in the background. The whole shebang.

Even now, looking back on it all, I think that those years were special. I'm sure that if you were to examine the attributes of the time one by one, you wouldn't discover anything all that noteworthy. Just the heat generated by the engine of history, that limited gleam that certain things give off in certain places at certain times—that and a kind of inexplicable antsiness, as if we were viewing everything through the wrong end of a telescope. Heroics and villainy, rapture and disillusionment, martyrdom and revisionism, silence and eloquence, et cetera, et cetera . . . the stuff of any age. Only, in our day—if you'll forgive the overblown expression—it was all so colorful somehow, so very reach-out-and-grab-it palpable. There were no gimmicks, no discount coupons, no hidden advertising, no keep-'em-coming point-card schemes, no insidious, loopholing paper trails. Cause and effect shook hands; theory and reality embraced with aplomb. A prehistory to high capitalism: that's what I personally call those years.

But as to whether the era brought us—my generation, that is—any special radiance, well, I'm not so sure. In the final analysis, perhaps we simply passed through it as if we were watching an exciting movie: we experienced it as real—our hearts pounded, our palms sweated—but when the lights came on we just walked out of the cinema and picked up where we'd left off. For whatever reason, we neglected to learn any truly valuable lesson from it all. Don't ask me why. I am much too deeply bound up in those years to answer the question. There's just one thing I'd like you to understand: I'm not the least bit proud that I came of age then; I'm simply reporting the facts.

Now let me tell you about the girls. About the mixed-up sexual relations between us boys, with our brand-new genitals, and the girls, who at the time were, well, still girls.

But, first, about virginity. In the sixties, virginity held a greater significance than it does today. As I see it—not that I've ever conducted a survey—about fifty per cent of the girls of my generation were no longer virgins by the age of twenty. Or, at least, that seemed to be the ratio in my general vicinity. Which means that, consciously or not, about half the girls around still revered this thing called virginity.

Looking back now, I'd say that a large portion of the girls of my generation, whether virgins or not, had their share of inner conflicts about sex. It all depended on the circumstances, on the partner. Sandwiching this relatively silent majority were the liberals, who thought of sex as a kind of sport, and the conservatives, who were adamant that girls should stay virgins until they were married.

Among the boys, there were also those who thought that the girl they married should be a virgin.

People differ, values differ. That much is constant, no matter what the period. But the thing about the sixties that was totally unlike any other time is that we believed that those differences could be resolved.

This is the story of someone I knew. He was in my class during my senior year of high school in Kobe, and, frankly, he was the kind of guy who could do it all. His grades were good, he was athletic, he was considerate, he had leadership qualities. He wasn't outstandingly handsome, but he was good-looking in a clean-cut sort of way. He could even sing. A forceful speaker, he was always the one to mobilize opinion in our classroom discussions. This didn't mean that he was much of an original thinker—but who expects originality in a classroom discussion? All we ever wanted was for it to be over as quickly as possible, and if he opened his mouth we were sure to be done on time. In that sense, you could say that he was a real friend.

There was no faulting him. But then again I could never begin to imagine what went on in his mind. Sometimes I felt like unscrewing his head and shaking it, just to see what kind of sound it would make. Still, he was very popular with the girls. Whenever he stood up to say something in class, all the girls would gaze at him admiringly. Any math problem they didn't understand they'd take to him. He must have been twenty-seven times more popular than I was. He was just that kind of guy.

We all learn our share of lessons from the textbook of life, and one piece of wisdom I've picked up along the way is that you just have to accept that in any collective body there will be such types. Needless to say, though, I personally wasn't too keen on his type. I guess I preferred, I don't know, someone more flawed, someone with a more unusual presence. So in the course of an entire year in the same class I never once hung out with the guy. I doubt that I even spoke to him. The first time I ever had a proper conversation with him was during the summer vacation after my freshman year of college. We happened to be attending the same driving school, and we'd chat now and then, or have coffee together during the breaks. That driving school was such a bore that I'd have been happy to kill time with any acquaintance I ran into. I don't remember much about our conversations; whatever we talked about, it left no impression, good or bad.

The other thing I remember about him is that he had a girlfriend. She was in a different class, and she was hands down the prettiest girl in the school. She got good grades, but she was also an athlete, and she was a leader—like him, she had the last word in every class discussion. The two of them were simply made for each other: Mr. and Miss Clean, like something out of a toothpaste commercial.

I'd see them around. Every lunch hour, they sat in a corner of the schoolyard, talking. After school, they rode the train home together, getting off at different stations. He was on the soccer team, and she was in the English-conversation club. When their extra-

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curricular activities weren't over at the same time, the one who finished first would go and study in the library. Any free time they had they spent together.

None of us—in my crowd—had anything against them. We didn't make fun of them, we never gave them a hard time; in fact, we hardly paid any attention to them at all. They really didn't give us much to speculate about. They were like the weather—just there, a physical fact. Inevitably, we spent our time talking about the things that interested us more: sex and rock and roll and Jean-Luc Godard films, political movements and Kenzaburo Oe novels, things like that. But especially sex.

O.K., we were ignorant and full of ourselves. We didn't have a clue about life. But, for us, Mr. and Miss Clean existed only in their Clean world. Which probably means that the illusions we entertained back then and the illusions they embraced were, to some extent, interchangeable.

This is their story. It's not a particularly happy story, nor, by this point in time, is it one with much of a moral. But no matter: it's our story as much as theirs. Which, I guess, makes it a form of cultural history. Suitable material for me to collect and relate here—me, the insensitive folklorist.

He and I ran into each other in the Italian town of Lucca, in the Tuscan foothills. My wife and I were renting an apartment in Rome at the time, but she was back in Japan for a few weeks, and I was travelling around by train. From Venice to Verona to Mantua to Modena, then a short stopover in Lucca, a peaceful little town, with a restaurant on the outskirts that served wonderful mushroom dishes. By coincidence, he was staying at the same hotel I was.

Small world.

That evening, we dined together at the restaurant. Both of us were travelling alone; both of us were bored. The older you get, the less fun it is to travel by yourself. The scenery starts to seem less scenic; other people's endless conversations are grating to your ears. You don't bother to try out new restaurants, and the waits for trains seem endless. You look at your watch again and again, and you don't even attempt to speak the language of the country you are travelling in. You close your eyes, and all that comes to mind are the mistakes of the past.

Perhaps that's why he and I felt somehow relieved to see each other, just as we had at driving school. We took a table by the fireplace, ordered a quality *rosso*, and proceeded to eat our way through an antipasto of *funghi trifolati*, followed by *fettuccine ai porcini* and *arrosto di tartufo bianco*.

He had come to Lucca to buy furniture, he told me. He ran a trading firm that specialized in European furniture, and, of course, he was successful. He didn't brag or anything, but I could tell at a glance that this man had the world in his hands. It was in the clothes he wore, in the way he talked, the way he carried himself. Success looked good on him, and, in a way, it was pleasing to see.

Initially, we talked about Italy. The unreliable train schedules, the inordinate amount of time devoted to meals. Then, I don't remember what led up to it, but by the time the waiter brought a second bottle of wine he was already telling me his story, and I was commenting on it at appropriate intervals. I guess he'd been wanting to tell someone for a long time, but hadn't been able to bring himself to do it. If it hadn't been for the cozy restaurant and the bouquet of the '83 Coltibuono, he might never have broached the subject. But talk he did.

"I always thought I was a boring person," he said. "Even when I was little, I was boxed in. I saw fences all around me, and I was careful never to go beyond them. There were guidelines, like on a highway: take the right lane only for this exit, merge ahead, no passing. You just had to follow the signs and you'd get there. So that was how I did everything—I did it the right way—and, as a result, all the adults fussed over me and praised me. When I was young, I thought that everyone saw things the same way. But, sooner or later, I learned that that wasn't the case."

I held my wineglass toward the fire and gazed at it for a while.

"My whole life—or, at least, the first part of it—things went smoothly for me. I had no problems to speak of, but, on the other hand, did I have any notion of what it meant to be alive? I had no idea what I was doing, what I was after. I mean, I was good at math, I was good at English, I was good at sports. Straight flush. My folks patted me on the back, my teachers told me I had nothing to worry about. But what was it that I was really cut out for? What did I want to do with myself? Should I study law? Engineering? Should I go to medical school? Any of the above would have been fine. So I did what my parents and teachers told me to do and I majored in law at Tokyo University."

He took another sip of wine. "Do you remember my girlfriend in high school?"

"Fujisawa something, wasn't it?" I dredged my memory for her name. I wasn't at all sure, but it came up correct.

He nodded. "That's right, Yoshiko Fujisawa. Well, the same went for her. I could tell her everything I was feeling, and she understood. We could have gone on talking forever. It was . . . I mean, until I met her, I'd never had a friend I could really talk to."

He and Yoshiko Fujisawa were such spiritual twins it was creepy. They were leaders. School superstars. They came from good homes, where their parents nevertheless didn't really get along. The fathers had other women and didn't always come home at night. The only thing that kept the parents from divorcing was what other people would think. The mothers ruled the households, and the children were pushed to be the best at whatever they did. Neither child could get close to anyone. They were both popular, but essentially friendless, and they didn't understand why. Perhaps normal imperfect human beings simply preferred the company of other normal imperfect human beings.

They were always lonely, always on edge. But then, out of the blue, they met each other. They accepted each other. They fell in love. They felt completely at ease with each other, especially when they were alone together. They had so many secrets to share; they never tired of talking about their isolation, their insecurities, their dreams.

When it came to physical contact, they had their rules: never to take off their clothes, to touch each other only with their hands. Once a week, they'd spend the afternoon in one or the other's bedroom. Both houses were quiet—absent father, mother out on errands. They allowed themselves ten or fifteen minutes of hectic groping before returning to their studies, chairs side by side at the desk. "O.K., enough of this, huh? Back to the books," she'd say, straightening her skirt.

They both got good grades. Studying, for them, was no hardship at all, just second nature. They'd even race each other to solve math problems. "That was fun," he'd say. Yes, it sounds stupid, but to them it *was* fun. Such fun as we flawed humans will likely never understand.

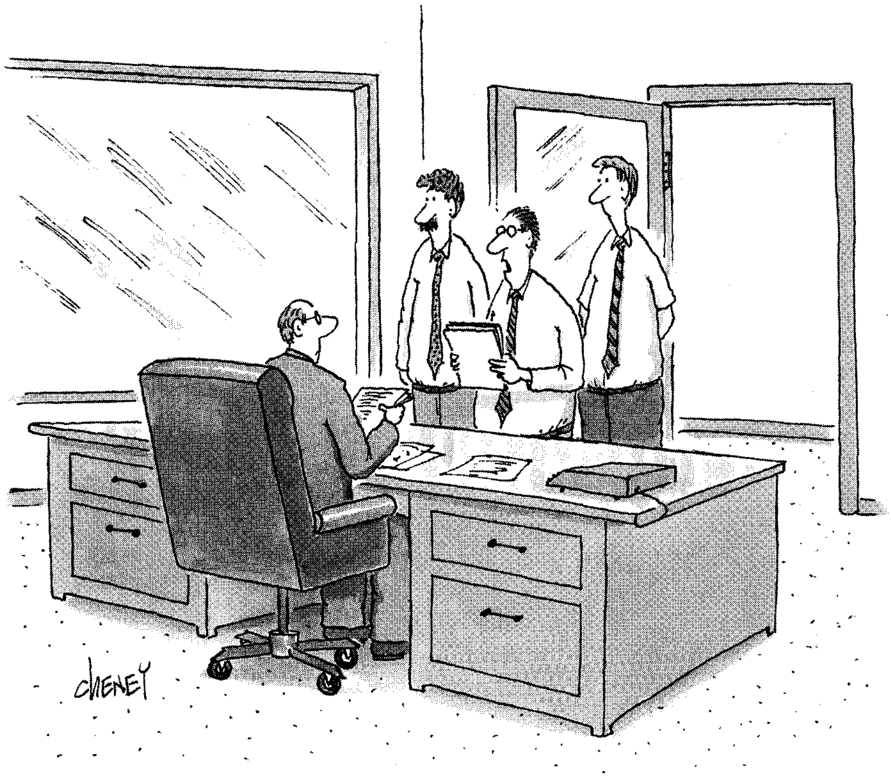
Yet somehow these relations didn't entirely satisfy him. He felt as though something was missing. He wanted to sleep with her. He wanted to have sex. "Physical union" were the words he used. "I thought it would give us a more intimate understanding of each other," he told me. "It just seemed like the most natural next step."

She, however, didn't agree. She pinched her lips together and gave a little shake of her head. "I like you and all, but I want to stay a virgin until I'm married," she said. No matter how hard he tried to persuade her, she wouldn't change her mind. "You know I like you," she'd say. "Really and truly, I do. But that's that, and this is different. I'm sorry, but just bear with me. Please. If you truly love me, can't you let it go?"

"If that was how she wanted it," he told me, "I had to respect her wishes. It wasn't like she was asking for the impossible. I personally didn't think virginity was such a big deal. I doubt I'd have cared whether the girl I married was a virgin or not. I'm no radical thinker, but that doesn't make me a fundamentalist. I'm simply a realist. The important thing is for a man and a woman to know where they're coming from, mutually. That's what I thought. But she had an image of the life she wanted to live. And I put up with it. We went on petting, hands under our clothes—you know the kind of thing."

"I believe so," I said.

He blushed, then smiled. "It wasn't so bad, as far as it went, but I couldn't stop thinking about sex. To me, we were only halfway there. I wanted to be one with her. I wanted nothing covered up, nothing hidden. It was a matter of



"Sorry, sir—we seem to have lost five million dollars in the fog of accounting."

staking a claim. I needed some kind of sign. Sure, my sex drive was part of it, but it wasn't just that. Never once in my life had I felt completely united with anything or anyone. I was always alone. Always cramped up inside that box. I wanted to free myself. I wanted to discover the real me. By sleeping with her, I thought I might be able to break out."

He approached her with a plan. As soon as they finished college, he said, they could get married. If she wanted to get engaged, they could do that even sooner. It was no problem at all. She looked straight at him for a second. Then a smile floated across her face. A really lovely smile. She was clearly happy to hear those words from him. But, at the same time, it was a smile hedged with forbearance, with a faint hint of sadness. Not condescending, exactly, but not encouraging, either—at least, that's what he sensed.

"It's impossible," she said. "You and I will never get married. I'm going to marry someone a little older than me, and you're going to marry someone a little younger. That's just how it goes. Women mature earlier than men, and they age faster, too. Even if we did get married right after college, it wouldn't last. Anyway, we can't keep going like this. You know I like you, more than I've ever liked anyone else. But that's that, and this is this"—a pet phrase of hers, apparently. "We're still in high school. We lead protected lives. The real world is a lot bigger and a lot more difficult. We have to prepare ourselves."

He knew what she was trying to say. He was much more of a realist in his thinking, after all, than most boys of his generation. If he'd been told the same thing as a general proposition, he might well have agreed. But this was no general proposition; this concerned him very specifically.

"I don't buy that," he told her. "I love you and I want to be with you. I'm very clear on this. It's very important to me. I don't care if some things don't hold up in the real world—honestly, this will. I love you that much. I'm crazy about you."

She shook her head, as if to say, "It can't be helped." Then, stroking his hair, she asked, "Do you really think we know the first thing about love? Our love has never been tested. We're still children, you and I."

He was too disheartened to respond. Once again, he hadn't been able to break down the walls that surrounded him, and he was only too aware of how powerless he was. I can't do a damn thing, he thought. If things keep going like this, I'll probably live out my whole life inside this box, year after pointless year.

The two of them stayed together until they graduated from high school. Rendezvousing in the library, studying together, petting under their clothes. She didn't seem to think that there was anything wrong with this arrangement; in fact, she seemed almost to relish the incompleteness of it. While everyone else imagined that they—Mr. and Miss Clean—were enjoying an ideal youth, he alone was unconsoled.

Finally, in the spring of 1967, he left for Tokyo University. She stayed in Kobe, where she enrolled at a very proper women's college. It was a top-rated school among such institutions, but hardly a challenge for her. She could easily have got into Tokyo University, but she didn't even sit for the entrance exams. To her mind, that kind of education was unnecessary. "I'm not looking for a career in the Ministry of Finance. I'm a girl—it's different for me. You, you're going to go far, but I'm just going to take it easy for these four years. An interlude, you know, a kind of rest stop. Because once I get married I won't be having a career, now, will I?"

Her attitude disappointed him. He'd been hoping that the two of them would go to Tokyo together and reshape their relationship into something new. He urged her to rethink it, but she just shook her head.

The summer after his first year in college (the same summer that he and I met up at the driving school), he went home to Kobe, and they saw each other almost every day. She took him on long drives, and they petted, just like old times. But he couldn't help noticing that something had begun to change between them. The change wasn't drastic. In a way, things were a little too much the same. The way she talked, the way she dressed, her opinions—almost everything about her was as it had been before. But he no longer wanted to blend back into his old life. It was the law of dynamics: little by little, repetition after repetition, the two of them had fallen out of synch. And it wouldn't have been so bad, if only he knew what direction he was veering in.

He had been lonely in Tokyo, still unable to make friends. The city was crowded and dirty, the food tasteless. He thought about her all the time. At night, he'd hole up in his room and write to her. She wrote back (albeit much less frequently), letters detailing her daily activities, which he read over and over; if it hadn't been for those letters, he was sure he'd have gone mad. He took up smoking; he started drinking. Sometimes he even cut class.

How he had longed for the summer break, so that he could go home to Kobe! But now that he was there he was even more depressed. The funny thing was that he had been away for only three months. Why did everything suddenly seem so dusty, so lacklustre? The city he'd missed so much now looked rundown to him, just another self-absorbed provincial town. Making conversation with his mother was an ordeal. Going to the barbershop where he'd had his hair cut since he was a boy was a gloomy prospect. The waterfront where he walked the dog every day was a derelict tract of rubbish.

Even seeing her failed to boost his spirits. What the hell was wrong with him? Of course he still loved her, but that wasn't enough. Passion can't sustain itself forever. He had to play his hand, somehow, or the relationship would be suffocated into extinction.

He decided that he had to take the sex question out of the freezer and serve it up again. It was his last chance.

"These three months alone in Tokyo, I've thought of nothing but you. I really must be in love with you. No matter how far apart we are, my feelings are still the same. But while we're apart I get so insecure. I have dark moods. You may not understand this, but I've never felt so alone in my life. I need to have a real bond with you, an assurance that no matter how far we are from each other we will always be solidly connected."

She took a deep breath and kissed him. Ever so gently. "I'm sorry," she said. "I just can't give you my virginity. This is this, and that is that. I would do anything for you, anything but that. If you truly love me, please don't bring it up again."

Once more, he tried the subject of marriage.

"There are two girls in my class who are engaged," she told him, "but their fiancés already have real jobs. Marriage means responsibility."

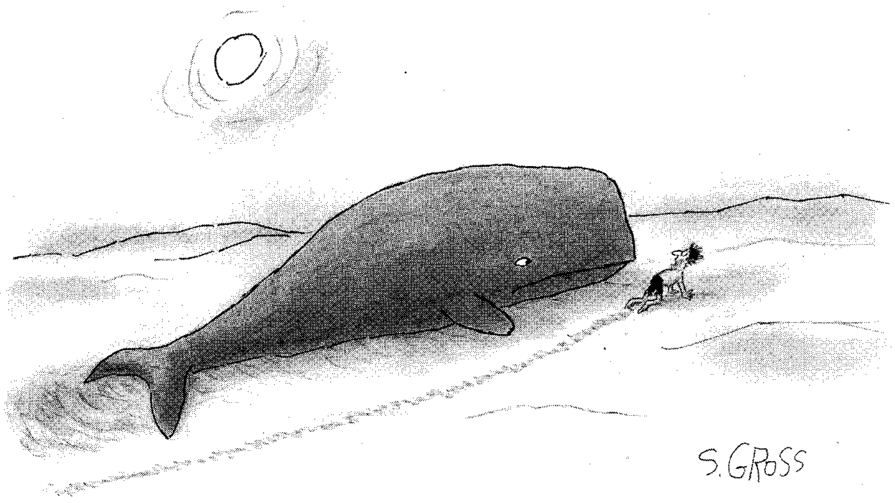
"I can take responsibility," he said firmly. "I got into a good school, and I promise you I'll get good grades. Any company, any government office would take me on. I'll get a job anyplace you name. I can do anything if I put my mind to it. What on earth is the problem?"

She closed her eyes and rested her head against her seat and fell silent. "I'm scared," she said after a while, then buried her face in her hands, sobbing. "Really scared. So scared I can't help myself. I'm scared of living, of having to make a life. In a few years, I'll have to go out into the real world, and it frightens me sick. Why can't you understand that? Why must you torture me like this?"

He put his arms around her. "There's nothing to be afraid of," he said. "I'm here. Look at me, I'm scared, too, as scared as you are. But if you and I are together I know that we can make it. If we pool our strengths, there's nothing to be scared of, nothing at all."

She shook her head. "You just don't understand. I'm a woman. I'm not like you. You don't know a thing about it. Not a thing."

Nothing he could say did any good. She just kept on crying. And then she said the strangest thing. "Listen, even if I break up with you, I'll still remember you forever. Honestly. I'll never forget. You know how much I like you. You're the first person I've ever cared for, and it's made me so happy just to be with you. Please understand. If it's some kind of promise you want, I promise. I'll sleep with you. But not now. After I'm married I'll sleep with you. I promise."



"First, let's concentrate on water. Then we'll worry about krill."

• •

"What the hell was she saying? It boggled my mind," he said, gazing at the glowing hearth. The waiter brought our *primi piatti* and added another log to the fire, sending out crackling sparks. The middle-aged couple at the next table were deliberating over the dessert menu. "I just couldn't figure it out. I went home and her words kept playing over and over in my mind, but I simply could not follow her reasoning. Does it make any sense to you?"

"I guess she meant that she was going to stay a virgin until her wedding night, but once she was married and her virginity wasn't an issue she'd be able to have an affair with you. Something like that."

"Yeah, something along those lines. That's the only way I could read it."

"Unique, I'll give her that. And logical, in a way."

A mild smile played over his lips. "True enough. There was some logic to it."

"A virgin bride, an adulterous wife. It's like a classic French novel. But with no ballrooms or foot servants."

"And yet to her that was the only realistic solution," he said.

"Sad," I said.

He shot me a penetrating look, then nodded slowly. "Yeah, sad. Pathetic, really. You hit the nail on the head," he said. "By now I think so, too. I've done my share of growing older. But at the time, no, I couldn't see it that way. I was still a kid, and totally in the dark about the little tremors that unsettle people's minds. The whole thing came as such a surprise—it threw me for a loop."

"I imagine it would," I concurred.

Then, by tacit agreement, we both ate our *tartufi*.

"I guess you can see what's coming," he said after a while. "She and I broke up. Neither one of us came out and said anything. It just came to a natural end. Very peacefully. We just got tired of trying to keep the relationship going. As I saw it, her notions about life weren't . . . How can I put it? Well, she didn't come off as very sincere. No, that's not right. What I mean is I knew she could do better. I was disappointed in her. Virginity, marriage—instead of agonizing over such conventional issues, she should have been trying for more out of life."

"But that was beyond her," I said.

He nodded. "I suppose," he said, forking a meaty slice of mushroom to his mouth. "It happens. You lose resilience. There comes a point where you're stretched to the limit, and you can't go any further. The same thing could've happened to me. From childhood on, both of us had been herded along. Pushed and prodded—go forward, get ahead. It gets to where you're so well trained, so conditioned, you can do only what you're told to do. Until, one day, you just snap."

"But you, how is it that you didn't end up that way?" I asked.

"I got over it somehow," he said after a moment's thought. Then he set down his knife and fork, and wiped his mouth with his napkin. "After she and I broke up, I got a girlfriend in Tokyo. A nice girl. We lived together for a while. And, to tell the truth, there were none of the rumblings and jitters I'd had with Yoshiko Fujisawa. It was an honest relationship, and I really liked her. She taught me a lot about real human beings, and I also began to make friends. I took an interest in politics. I learned that realism can come in all shapes and sizes. The world is big enough for different values to coexist. There's no universal need to be an honors student. And that's how I found my footing in society."

"And became successful."

"Successful enough," he said, with a slightly disgruntled sigh. Then, looking at me as he might at a co-conspirator, he said, "Compared with other people our age, I admit, my income level is higher, objectively speaking." That's all he would say.

But I knew that that wasn't the end of the story, so I didn't say anything. I just waited for him to go on.

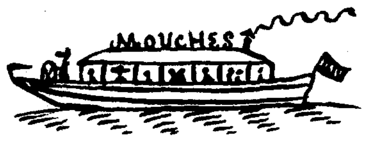
"I didn't see Yoshiko Fujisawa for a long time," he resumed. "A really long time. I graduated from university and got a job at a trading firm. And I worked there for five years, part of it at an overseas posting. Every day was filled with work. I was incredibly busy. Two years after college, I heard, through her mother, that she'd got married, but I didn't ask to whom. My first thought when I heard was, I wonder if she actually stayed a virgin until her wedding night. But then I felt a little sad. And a little sadder the next day. It was as if an era had come to an end, a door was closing behind me forever. Well, naturally. This was a girl I'd really and truly loved. We'd been sweethearts for four years, and I'd even thought about marriage. She was someone who figured that largely in my youth, so of course it made me sad. But, O.K., I really just hoped that she'd be happy. I wished her the best. I was—well, a little worried about her. She had her fragile side."

The waiter cleared our plates, and we ordered coffee.

"I married relatively late, when I was thirty-two. So I was still single when I got a phone call from Yoshiko. I was twenty-eight. Which makes it just over ten years ago now. In the meantime, I'd quit the company I was working for and had gone independent. My father lent me the capital, and I formed my own little company. I saw astronomical market-growth potential for imported furniture, and I stepped right in. But, as with any startup, nothing went smoothly at first. Delivery delays, depleted stock, warehouse charges piling up, the bank breathing down my neck—to be honest, I ran myself down and I nearly lost hope. It was probably the most difficult time in my life. And right in the middle of it she calls. I have no idea how she got my number. It was eight at night when the phone rang. I recognized her voice immediately. That's something you never forget. I felt a tinge of nostalgia—you bet I did. It just felt so good to hear an old girlfriend's voice at a time like that."

He looked long and hard at the fireplace, as if remembering. The restaurant had filled to capacity. People were talking and laughing at every table, utensils clattering, glasses tinkling.

"I don't know who her informants were, but she was up to date on everything about me. I mean everything. She knew that I was still single and had been based overseas, that I'd quit my company and struck out on my own. She knew it all. 'You'll come through it, you're the can-do guy. Just have confidence,' she told me. I can't tell you how happy it made me to hear such kind words. So then I asked about her. What sort of guy she'd married, whether they had kids, where they were living. Well, she didn't have any children. Her husband was four years older than she, and worked in television. A director, she tells me. I say, 'Sounds like he keeps busy.' 'He's busy, all right, too busy to have kids,' she says, then laughs. They lived in Tokyo, in a condo near Shinagawa. I was living in Shiroganedai. Not exactly neighbors, but close enough. 'Strange how things work out, isn't it?' I say—you know, whatever. Well, we talked about all the usual things that former high-school sweethearts talk about under the circumstances. It felt a little strained and awkward, but nice over all. Like two old friends catching up on everything. We talked for what seemed like hours. Then, when there was nothing more for either of us to say, this silence comes over the line. A real . . . How to put it? A really dense silence. The kind that invites all sorts of thoughts." He was focussing on his hands, folded on the tablecloth; then he looked up to meet my eyes. "I should have hung up then and there. 'Thanks for calling, it's been nice talking to you'—click, end of story. You see what I'm saying?"



"That would have been the most realistic thing to do," I agreed.

"But she stays on the line. She invites me to her place. Like, 'Why don't you drop by? My husband's away on business, and I'm bored all by myself.' Well, I don't know what to say, so I don't say anything. So she doesn't say anything. More silence. And then, do you know what she says? She says, 'You know, I still remember the promise I made to you.' "

"You know, I still remember the promise I made to you." At first, he claimed, he hadn't known what she was talking about—he'd never once considered it a real promise. But when it did come back to him he had to think that it was just a slip of the tongue, that she must have been confused.

No, she wasn't confused. To her, a promise was a promise.

For a moment, he lost sight of where all this was heading. What was the right thing to do? He looked around in desperation, but there were no walls around him, nothing to guide him anymore. Of course he wanted to sleep with her, that went without saying. Since their breakup, he'd imagined sleeping with her plenty of times. Even when he was seeing other women, his thoughts had found their way to her in the dark. Though he'd never seen her naked, he knew her body from the feel of it under her clothes.

He knew how risky it would be to sleep with her at this stage. He didn't want to go stirring up what he'd so calmly left behind in the shadows of his past. Intuition told him that this was not something he should do. But of course he couldn't refuse. Why should he refuse? It was a perfect fairy tale, a wish granted only once in a lifetime. She lived nearby, and she wanted to fulfill a promise made in the forests of the distant past.

He closed his eyes and couldn't say anything. He'd lost the power of speech.

"Hello?" she said. "You there?"

"I'll come right over," he said. "Can you tell me your address?"

"What would you have done?" he asked me.

I shook my head. I never know how to answer such questions.

He laughed, and looked down at the coffee cup on the table. "I went to her place. I knocked on her door. In a way, I was hoping that she wouldn't be at home. But she was there, all right, and as beautiful as ever. She poured us drinks, and we talked about the old days. We even listened to old records. Then what do you think happened?"

I had no idea. I told him I had no idea.

"When I was a kid, I read a children's story." He seemed to be addressing the far wall of the restaurant. "I forget the plot, but I still remember the last line. It went, 'And, when it was all over, the King and his courtiers roared with laughter.' Kind of a strange way to end a story, wouldn't you say?"

"I would," I said.

"I wish I could remember what the story was about. God knows I've tried. All I remember is that crazy last line: 'And, when it was all over, the King and his courtiers roared with laughter.' What the hell kind of story ends like that?"

By then we'd finished our coffee.

"We embraced," he said, "but I didn't sleep with her. She didn't undress. We used our hands, just like old times. I thought it would be for the best. And she seemed to think so, too. We petted for a long, long time, without saying anything. What was there for us to say? That was the only way that we could really recognize each other after all those years. Back when we were in school, of course, it would have been different. Plain, ordinary, natural sex might have brought us to some kind of mutual understanding. And, just maybe, we could have been happy together. But we were long past that now. Those days were locked away, and no one could break the seal."

He twirled his empty cup around on its saucer. He kept at it so long that the waiter came over to check on us. But that merely prompted him to return the cup to its original position and order another espresso.

"I stayed there maybe an hour, all told. Any more than that and I'd probably have gone out of my mind," he said with a sly smile. "I said goodbye to her and left. She said goodbye, too, and this time it really was goodbye, once and for all. I knew it, and she knew it. The last I saw of her, she was standing in the doorway with her arms crossed. She looked as if she were about to say something, but she didn't. I knew what she would have said, in any case. I was exhausted . . . hollowed out, empty. I walked around aimlessly, feeling as if I'd wasted my whole life. I wished I could go back to her place and just screw her, long and hard. But I couldn't bring myself to, nor would it have made anything any better."

He shook his head. He drank his second espresso.

"It embarrasses me to say this, but I went straight out and got myself a hooker. First time in my life. And very likely the last."

I looked at my own coffee cup and thought about what a standoffish jerk I must have been in the old days. I wanted to let him in on what I was thinking, but I doubted that I'd be able to find the right words.

"Telling the story like this, I feel like I'm talking about someone else," he said with a chuckle, then fell silent.

"'And, when it was all over, the King and his courtiers roared with laughter,'" he said, finally. "I always think of that sentence whenever I remember that time. Conditioned reflex, I guess. I don't know what it is, but sadness always seems to contain some strange little joke."

As I said at the beginning, there isn't much here that you could call a moral. Nonetheless, it's the story of his life, and it's the story of all our lives. Which is why I couldn't laugh when I heard it and why I still can't. ♦

(*Translated, from the Japanese, by Alfred Birnbaum.*)

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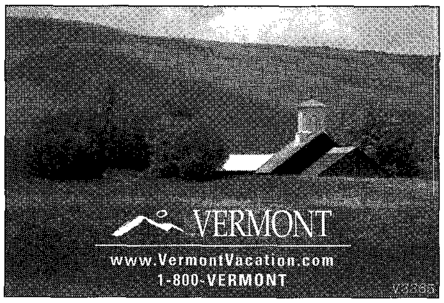

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THE CRITICS

BOOKS

SUPERIOR PERSON

Curzon in India.

BY SIMON SCHAMA

They don't make empires the way they used to. Take the imperial brag. Here is George Nathaniel, Viscount Curzon—the most grandiloquent, if not the greatest, Viceroy of India—and the subject of David Gilmour's elegant biography, "Curzon" (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $45), waxing epic-messianic on the British imperial mission: "To me the message is carved in granite; it is hewn out of the rock of doom—that our work is righteous and that it shall endure." And here is Proconsul Jay Garner, musing on the prospects of the American imperium in Iraq: "If we make headway on a lot of major things, we will put ourselves in a marvellous up-ramp where things can begin happening. If we don't do that we're on a negative ramp."

And, frankly, the dress code has gone right down the thunder box. Meeting with the Emir of Afghanistan, in 1894, Curzon appeared in a uniform acquired at a theatrical costumier, complete with operatic epaulettes, a curved sword borrowed in India, and a row of clinking medals. Installed as Viceroy five years later, Curzon, who was a stickler for protocol, insisted that his councillors don white knee breeches and white silk stockings for formal occasions, as he himself did, and not "take refuge in the less dangerous but irregular trouser." Proconsul Garner, on the other hand, appeared in Dress-Down Friday casuals and proceeded to wander amiably around the streets of his shattered bailiwick, like a Scout leader vaguely searching for his Eagle Troop. His successor, Proconsul L. Paul Bremer III, favors the battle dress of the C.E.O.—crisply pressed suit, high-end haircut, peekaboo breast-pocket handkerchief—to project an air of mildly corporate persuasiveness, just the right note for an empire that fancies it can be run like a business opportunity, and busies itself handing out contracts to the willing while failing to mop up the brimming sewage. But then ours is an empire, unlike Curzon's, that wishes it weren't there—at least, not as another election season comes into view. Was there ever an empire whose new subjects had to implore their rulers to supply rudimentary law and order?

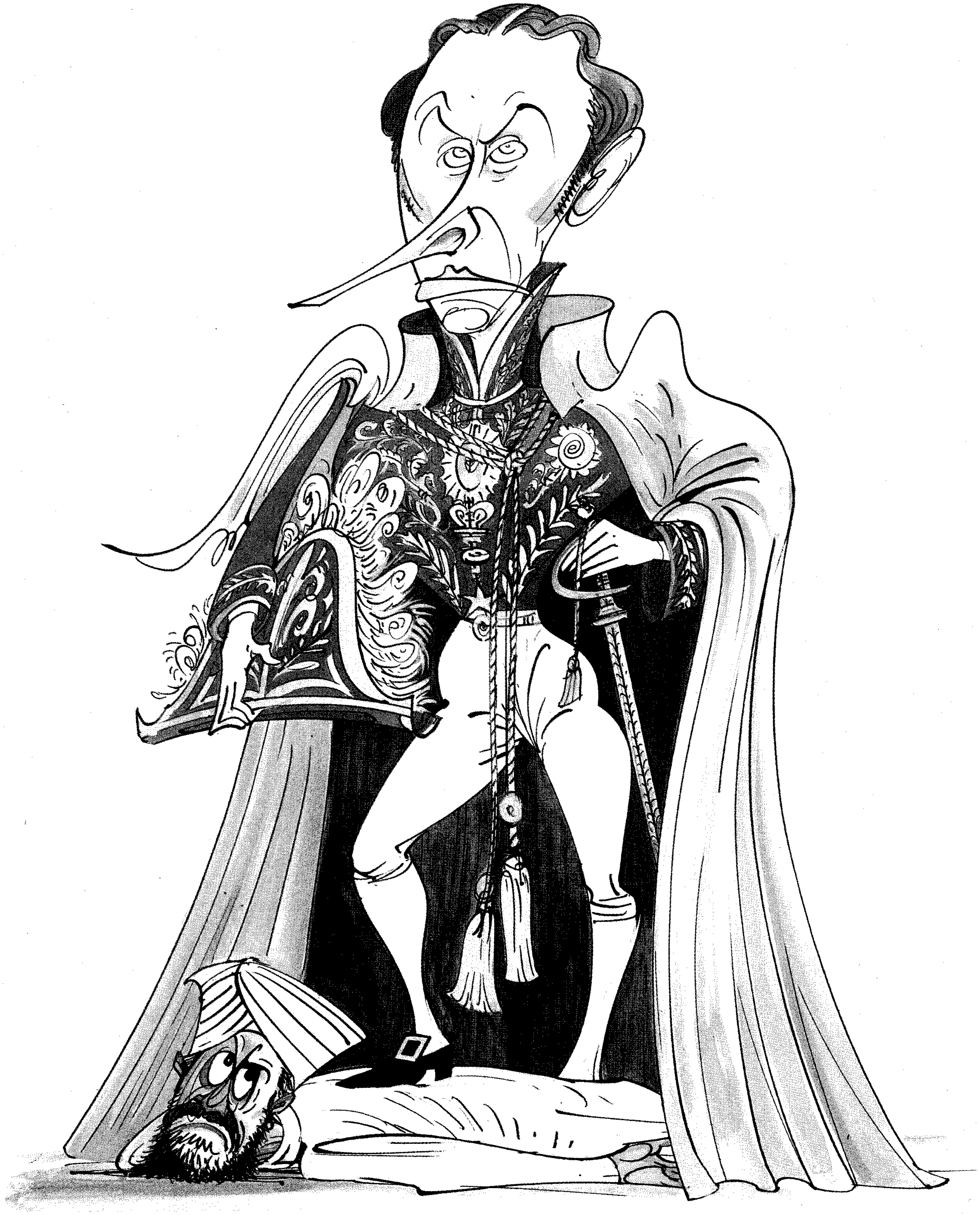
Curzon had no doubt that the only justification for empire was the efficiency of its administration. In the choice between good government (as he saw it) and self-government, he believed that his duty was emphatically to the former when it came to India. This was best provided by a paternalist state, staffed by disinterested professional public servants, intervening to guarantee the common decencies of life—uncontaminated water, for example, whether in Birmingham or Bombay. Democratic self-determination was certainly worthwhile in the fullness of time, but it was not going to put rice on the table.

These were, more or less, the maxims with which Curzon grew up, and which he seldom abandoned in forty years' service to an empire that was, as the dedication to one of his many books put it, "under Providence the greatest instrument for good the world has ever seen." Many of his generation, born around the middle of the nineteenth century, felt the same righteous intoxication. Although the British had come to India, in the eighteenth century, to make money, the making of it required military force—just enough, of course, to create the political stability needed for the Anglo-Indian economy to take off under its own steam. But the wars, instead of calming India, had a nasty way of stirring it up, either inside the country or on its frontiers, and this triggered yet more intervention, until, somehow, the British, who had never meant to be occupiers, occupied virtually the entire subcontinent. With that unlooked-for transformation from a trading power to a governing power, the rationale for the Raj changed. Instead of making profits, the idea was to make India a better place. Instead of businessmen, Britain sent out Improvers, educated in Indian languages at Haileybury College, zealous secular missionaries for Victorian education and morality. In a valedictory speech delivered in Bombay, Curzon, who communed almost obsessively with the ghosts of Viceroys past, faithfully reiterated this ideal:

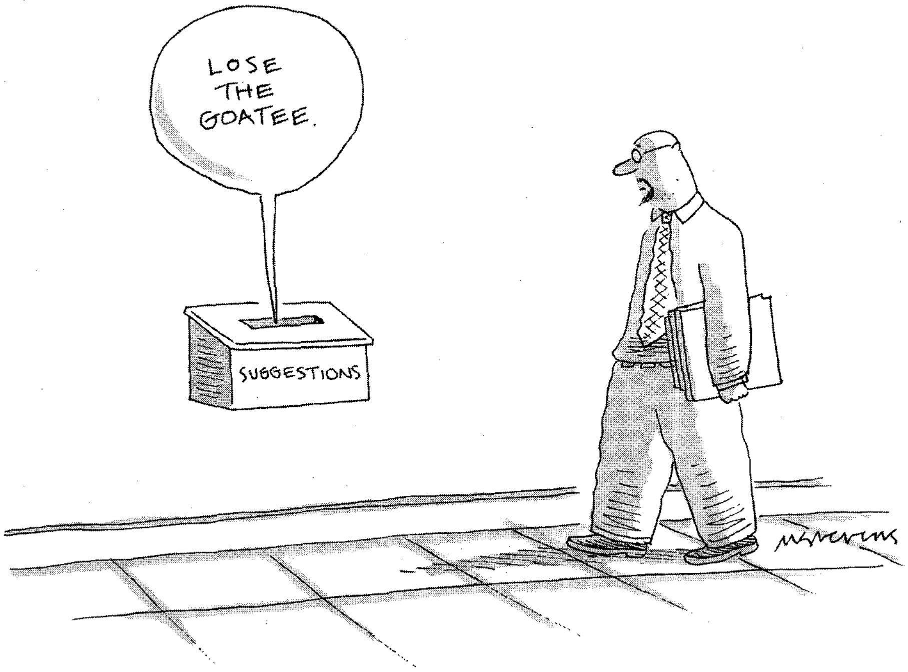
> Remember that the Almighty has placed your hand on the greatest of His ploughs, in whose furrow the nations of the future are germinating and taking shape, to drive the blade a little forward in your time, and to feel that somewhere among these millions you have left a little justice or happiness or prosperity.

As a boy at Eton College in the mid-eighteen-seventies, Curzon heard a speech by Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, the legal member of the Viceroy's Council, which seems to have fired his personal sense of mission. Stephen's father, James, had been among the first generation of India's Westernizers, who believed that the colonized would be led toward self-determination but only after many generations during which the imperial guardians would supply the rule of law, Anglophone education, and, above all, the peace needed for the flowering of prosperity. The toiling peasant, freed from the brutal exactions of native tax collectors, would be able to break through a cycle of subsistence, and produce crops (like raw cotton)

GERALD SCARFE



Viscount Curzon believed that the British Empire was, as he wrote, "the greatest instrument for good the world has ever seen."



actually demanded by British manufacturers and consumers. As the thrifty cultivator prospered, so other demands would make themselves spontaneously felt: literacy, sanitation, and, finally, responsible citizenship.

This was the "partnership," often mentioned by imperial apologists, whose consummation would be the blessed day when power could be responsibly transferred from rulers to ruled; the Union Jack would flutter down the flagpole while a band of marines, their pith helmets blancoed to dazzling whiteness, played Elgar, and an audience of grateful native beneficiaries politely applauded and made their way to the tea tent. It seldom turned out that way. The "empire of free trade" was free only up to a point. When it worked to flood the Indian market (once the province of a thriving native cotton-print industry) with inexpensive manufactured goods, it could be upheld, but, if Indian textiles threatened to make inroads in Britain, tariff manipulations made sure that they remained uncompetitive.

Nor was the legacy of a "parliamentary empire" and the rule of law straightforward. In India—whose three hundred million made up nearly three-fourths of the Empire's population (and a fifth of the world's in 1900)—the conditions of pacification (an army of two hundred thousand) permanently stunted economic growth through the sheer weight of land revenues needed to fund it. When the British left their Raj, the per-capita income of Indians was precisely as they had found it, two hundred years earlier.

An American edition of Gilmour's "Curzon" (which was published in England nine years ago) is a timely opportunity to consider all these matters, especially since the empire on which the sun was never supposed to set has lately been enjoying a positive reëvaluation, above all in Niall Ferguson's dashing and trenchant "Empire," a book that is unembarrassed not only to sing its praises but to urge its example on the makers of the new Pax Americana. Though Gilmour's biography is less concerned with tackling the knottier cost-benefit problems of making and keeping empires, lest such problems get in the way of a fast-moving, entertaining, and finely written story, moments along the route of an eventful life have a gripping topicality. Exactly a century ago, in 1903, the Viceroy made a side trip to the Persian Gulf, in effect the gateway to Britain's Raj (and referred to by some as "Curzon Lake"), to encourage the Sultan of Muscat and the Sheikh of Kuwait to think of Britain—rather than the Ottoman Empire—as their principal protector. "The peace of these waters must still be maintained," Curzon insisted, and followed with a classic instance of empire-think: "Your independence will continue to be upheld, and the influence of the British government must remain supreme." In other words, ignore the Turks, resist the Russians, and expect frequent "good will" visits from the Royal Navy.

Gilmour has a soft spot for Curzon, and he succeeds in persuading the reader that his subject was a fundamentally decent, startlingly egotistical, surpassingly learned man who combined huge reserves of self-belief with an almost incredible ability to alienate everyone he thought his inferior. His friend Lord George Hamilton, the Secretary of State for India, urged him to suffer fools more gladly, since they constitute most of the human race, but to no avail. Curzon worked himself, as he often said, like a horse and expected others to do likewise. "Grind, grind grind," he moaned in a letter to his wife, Mary, in 1901, "till the collar breaks and the poor beast stumbles and dies. . . . But it has always been so. The willing horse is flogged till he drops and the work goes on." And on it went, indeed. On tours of inspection through the Indian provinces, Curzon managed (tiger shoots permitting) an average of thirty to forty letters a day. Delegation he thought fit only for the idle and the criminally negligent.

Gilmour is understandably eager to rescue Curzon from the rich lore of mostly apocryphal Curzoniana testifying to His Lordship's comical detachment from the experience of the rest of mankind. He never did, it seems, marvel at the whiteness of the skin of the working classes, upon seeing soldiers bathing near Armentières in the Great War; nor, on exiting his club and finding himself without a cab, did he summon an omnibus and order the driver to take him home. He did try to silence the chimes of Big Ben, on the ground that they disturbed his sleep, and he complained that the red carpet rolled out to greet him in Calcutta when he became Viceroy was "the size of a postage stamp." But even if the gently taunting rhyme composed at Oxford—

My name is George Nathaniel Curzon,
I am a most superior person,
My cheek is pink, my hair is sleek,
I dine at Blenheim once a week

—trapped him throughout his career in the stereotype of the haughty aristocrat, there is little point in pretending that Curzon was common clay. In fact, an uneasy suspicion that his seven-hundred-year-old family of Derbyshire landowners had done little except hang on to their estate seems to have prodded into action what became the most hyperactive sense of duty in late-Victorian England.

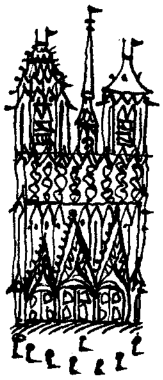
There were the usual torments of growing up in that era: an indifferent father, who seems to have been slightly vexed at being pulled from the obscurity of a country rectory by the accidents of descent to become Lord Scarsdale; a governess who, even by the standards of the time, was creatively sadistic, ordering little George to write specially to the butler to have the cane made with which he might, please, be thoroughly thrashed. But George could hardly have missed the summons to imperial greatness singing from the stones of the Scarsdale house, Kedleston, one of the first English buildings that the great eighteenth-century Scottish architect Robert Adam worked on. Kedleston's façade featured a pilastered version of the triumphal Arch of Constantine and an interior saloon inspired by the Pantheon and decorated with niches modelled on Hadrian's Temple of Venus and Rome. In the circumstances, it was not surprising that the boy developed a precociously grandiose manner, writing home from his prep school at the age of twelve that "a hamper is undoubtedly requisite" and must include "several pots of superior jam." At Eton, he excelled at "declamation," and although he came second in the Latin prize oration in 1877, as David Dilks's biography "Curzon in India" tells us, a corrected citation satisfyingly notes that "the best declamation has been written by Foley, the second best by Mr Curzon. Unfortunately, in the greater part of what he has written Foley has been anticipated by Cicero. The prize therefore goes to Mr Curzon."

There was no question that this was a very clever fellow. And, attached to the notion that deep knowledge was a qualification, rather than a disqualification, for high office, Curzon never shrank from parading his well-stocked intellect. It gave him what Margot Asquith, the wife of the Liberal Prime Minister, called an air of "enamelled self-assurance." In the apprenticeship that he designed for his imperial career, he undertook long journeys and intensive investigations, both scholarly and personal, of the history, archeology, religion, languages, and ethnic customs of Central Asia, a region that he believed was vital to protecting the Empire's crown jewel, India. Based on the experience of these journeys of many months—travelling by mule and bullock cart; often cooking for himself; sleeping on Oriental rugs—he wrote thousands of pages: books on Persia, on Russia in Central Asia, on Kashmir and the Pamirs, and even on the problems of the Far East. And he believed that this direct experience gave him the right to speak with authority on the most urgent concerns of security for the British Empire, both inside Parliament and out.

Treks through the Caucasus were not the young Curzon's only expeditions. He grazed the dinner tables of London society and aristocratic country-house parties, where he was admired for his quick repartee, his waggish thank-you verses, and the air of chiselled Roman authority that he made sure to project. Women, some of them married, panted after him, and he returned the favor, along with borrowings from Dante Gabriel Rossetti. More than any other biographer, Gilmour makes clear that Curzon's libido was inseparable from his political ambition and just as voracious. Until he married the American Mary Leiter, at the age of thirty-six, he had a succession of passionate affairs, despite a style of love letter that sounded like an official memo. When his lover Sibell Grosvenor decided to marry one of his friends, Curzon's parting exclamation of anguish was "The taking out of a man's life of that which he has grown to regard as a treasure and core of his being is not accomplished without a pang."

The self-conscious development of what journalists, reviewing Curzon's maiden speech in the House of Commons, called his "unconquerable 'cheek' " and "his air of ineffable superiority" was all part of his intensive training to be Viceroy. Before assuming the office, in 1899, he visited the Viceregal Lodge in Simla; Lord Elgin was in office at the time, and Curzon confided to his diary that when he returned it would be as Viceroy. While he was Under-Secretary of State for India, he twice lobbied Lord Salisbury for the job, and finally got it.

En route to his new post, Curzon read everything and interrogated everyone about India, on and on through the broiling heat of the Red Sea. Once he arrived, he dismissed the notion that the Raj could simultaneously advance representative self-government for educated Indians—in courts and local government—and preserve the peace, stability, and prosperity of the Indian empire. But this was more or less what Queen Victoria had promised in an 1858 Royal Proclamation opening the civil service in India without prejudice to Indians and British. Formidable barriers had been placed in the way of any practical realization, not the least being that examinations were held only in England, precluding the possibility of high-caste Hindus, with their taboo on oceanic travel, competing. The establishment of three universities had created a literate class, especially in Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras. Many of the educated were schoolteachers, journalists, doctors, and lawyers, but many of them were petty civil servants, without whom the Raj would have been incapable of governing, since the "heaven-born" Indian Civil Service—the collectors and district commissioners, the police chiefs, surveyors, engineers, and magistrates numbered barely nine hundred men.



For Curzon, however, the *babus* of Calcutta and Bombay were hardly better than overeducated parasites who, under the guise of Indian patriotism, were dedicated to taking power for themselves and killing off the Raj as quickly as possible. So he went out of his way to ignore and alienate them, duly turning moderates into militants. As urban types—the *bhadralok*—they had nothing in common with the masses of peasants whose interests they purported to uphold. He, the Viceroy, knew better, that the toiling ryot was more interested in concrete improvements in daily life—the construction of irrigation canals, the establishment of credit "societies" to get the moneylenders off his back—and these he provided. Gilmour rightly gives Curzon credit for pushing through such ameliorations, yet, catalogued as they are, they inevitably resemble one of the Viceroy's own self-congratulatory memorandums, rather than offering a full picture of Indian life during his tenure.

Curzon liked to think of himself as a mover and shaker, but mostly what he moved and shook was piles of paper. Though he did his tours, ordained into existence thousands of miles of railroad track, and created an agricultural research institute, he was insulated from the overwhelming reality of India at the turn of the century—a reality of stark horror. Beginning in 1896, in Elgin's Viceroyalty, a succession of famines, triggered by failures of the monsoon, swept the country; the devastation was compounded by epidemics of cholera and bubonic plague, which in turn weakened the physical resistance of survivors. Curzon, the inheritor of this mass misery, was tactless in saying that the disaster was no more his responsibility than that of "the man in the moon," but the issue was, rather, whether he did everything in his power to alleviate the suffering. Gilmour spends forty pages describing the relentless feud between Curzon and the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, Herbert Kitchener, which led eventually to the Viceroy's resignation; it seems a pity that he could not have found more than a page to examine the famine-relief policy of the Viceroy and his government. Missing, too, among the illustrations of the Viceroy with dead tigers, the Viceroy with assorted nizams and maharajas is another kind of contemporary photograph, the kind taken by missionaries with Kodaks, of cadavers of children who had been devoured by wild dogs and jackals, of saucer-eyed victims of starvation.

In fairness, Gilmour's biography appeared long before the savage indictment set out in Mike Davis's "Late Victorian Holocausts" (2001), a book that at its most extreme accuses the British Empire of creating the permanent immiseration of the Third World. The reader doesn't have to agree with this conclusion (or even sympathize with Davis's Marxism) to see that he makes a devastatingly persuasive case about the British preference for traditional market-and-revenue interests over "indiscriminate" relief. Curzon himself claimed "that there had never been a famine when the general mortality had been less, when the distress has been more amply or swiftly relieved." But there were fierce voices of dissent at the time—from the nationalist politician Romesh Chandra Dutt and from the first Indian British M.P., Dadabhai Naoroji, and also from Western journalists like Vaughan Nash, of the Manchester *Guardian*. They looked with disgust at the eligibility "tests" that were imposed on the starving, and (much like those in Ireland a half century earlier) forced them to walk, often many miles, to work camps, where they were required to labor nine hours a day for as little as fifteen ounces of food. Even the official British report conceded that the famine of 1899 to 1900 took a million and a quarter lives, but the mortality estimates of modern historians like Burton Stein put the figure closer to six and a half million dead.

In a public debate with Dutt (which Gilmour thinks Curzon won), the Viceroy blamed the vicissitudes of climate rather than any government policy for the severity of the disaster. His critics did not, of course, make light of the failure of monsoon and harvest, but their point was that the weight of the taxes—especially the land-revenue and the salt tax (designed once again to favor British imports over domestic salt)—was so crushing that it reduced purchasing power to the point where modest but viable cultivators in bad years became destitute and, ultimately, starved. As always, the imperatives of British military policy—in this case the Boer War—made fiscal leniency out of the question. To his credit, Curzon did try to persuade the Westminster government to reduce the salt tax, as a gift to India in the year of the Coronation Durbar, but, not surprisingly, he failed. The exceptional distress endured during these years undercut the claims of the Raj to offer autocratic benevolence as an alternative to liberal, nationalist politics. The failings of the Curzon model made the appeal of *swadeshi*—self-help—the starting principle of Indian independence.

Curzon's anxiety about the budding of Indian nationalism was such that he created a primitive police-intelligence system to monitor its growth. Wherever he suspected institutions of fostering sedition, he did his utmost to cramp their growing space. University senates were cut back, while in a speech in Calcutta Curzon notoriously described truth as largely a Western invention. And, since the highest concentration of dangerous chatterers, especially in print, was in the densely populated province of Bengal, he took his knife to its political geography. The partition, which he presented, disingenuously, as an administrative necessity, was so transparently designed to separate Muslim from Hindu Bengalis, making each easier to govern, that it provoked an inevitable and ferocious backlash. Demonstrators took to the streets. Rabindranath Tagore wrote poems and songs in protest. Riots became violent. It was the beginning of the end of the Raj.

Curzon left India in 1905. Although he was still only in his mid-forties, it was more than a decade before he returned to office, as a minister in Lloyd George's coalition wartime government. In 1916, he was put in charge of the infant Air Board and eventually, to his heart's content, was made Foreign Secretary. In the years after the First World War, with crises constantly cropping up in the Near East, Curzon's mastery of detail counted. In a heated debate over whether Mosul should be given to the new Turkish Republic or remain part of the quasi-British protectorate of the Kingdom of Iraq, the Turkish foreign minister made the terrible mistake of wondering how his British opposite number could possibly know anything about the population of Mosul. As Gilmour writes, Curzon proceeded to show him how, including a lecture on the Kurdish majority and the historical differences between Ottomans and Turkomans. It is unlikely that any Foreign Secretary will ever know as much about this region as Curzon.

Yet, for all his grip on statistics, his mastery of memorandums, his geopolitical expertise, Curzon did, in the end, belong to the imperial past. By the time he was being considered (and rejected) for Prime Minister, in 1923, the devolution of power in India had gone so far that a dual government had been established, with Indians responsible for much internal administration and the British running military and strategic policy.

In the years before his death, in 1925, history was where he was happiest. He bought some of the most beautiful houses in the country and restored them with a light but exacting touch: the moated Bodiam Castle, in Sussex; the Tudor Montacute House, in Somerset; Tattershall Castle, in Lincolnshire. He wrote about them, of course; but his interest was not just that of a greedy aristocrat. He thought of these places—as he thought of his own life—as part of the national patrimony, the mysterious ravelling of past and future. Many of the houses were repaired for the nation on condition that they would be publicly accessible. And, in the same sense, Curzon insisted—as he had when he restored, exquisitely, the heavily damaged Taj Mahal and the town of Fatehpur Sikri—that the conservation of ancient and religious monuments was a sacred duty of whichever imperial power happened to be granted their temporary custody. "If there be any one who says to me there is no duty devolving upon a Christian government to preserve the monuments of a pagan art, or the sanctuaries of an alien faith, I cannot pause to argue with such a man." Because Curzon understood the power of tradition as a living thing, which gave an ancient community identity, faith, and hope, he had, as a young writer, warned against the rush to cozen traditional societies into dye-stamp modernity. In our own haste to make the world more like us we could do worse than heed his caution:

> We must remember that the ways of Orientals are not our ways, nor their thoughts our thoughts. Often when we think them backward and stupid, they think us meddlesome and absurd. The loom of time moves slowly with them, and they care not for high pressure and the roaring of the wheels. Our system may be good for us; but it is neither equally, not altogether good for them. Satan found it better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven; and the normal Asiatic would sooner be misgoverned by Asiatics than well governed by Europeans. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

Grecian Formulas

All Day Permanent Red: The First Battle Scenes of Homer's Iliad Rewritten, *by Christopher Logue (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $18).* The mounting pressure of a city siege, two politician-generals invoking gods, the amount of dust in the Middle East—this version of the first skirmishes in the Iliad has the immediacy of an embed's dispatches. Logue, a veteran of the Second World War, has been freely translating Homer since 1959. His verse displays a gift for the unexpected simile—the sound of the Greek army getting to its feet is like "a raked sky-wide Venetian blind." The music in the latest installment is wild and improvisational: "That unpremeditated joy as you / —the Uzi shuddering warm against your hip / Happy in danger in a dangerous place / Yourself another self you found at Troy— / Squeeze nickel through that rush of Greekoid scum!" But the final note is hushed, when, after the battle, we see the ridge overlooking the Trojan plain: "save for a million footprints, / Empty now."

The Songs of the Kings, *by Barry Unsworth (Nan A. Talese / Doubleday; $26).* A stubborn wind from the northeast ushers in rough times for the House of Atreus, and the Greek ships, en route to Troy, remain trapped in the straits at Aulis. Unsworth's retelling of the story, familiar from Euripides, of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia to appease the gods so that the boats can sail is a bold, modern tale with cynical riffs on the themes of duty and power, truth and fiction. His Greek warriors are schemers and media-savvy self-promoters who are desperate to look good in the sung reports that are their equivalent of the news media—songs that are, we realize, the seeds of the Homeric tradition. As Odysseus says, "Once things get into the Song you will never entirely succeed in getting them out again."

Sappho's Leap, *by Erica Jong (Norton; $24.95).* What if the poet Sappho had paused to tell the story of her life in the moment before her legendary leap from the cliff? It's a neat premise, and the grab bag of brilliant bits that is all we know of Sappho's life might, in defter hands, have been fashioned into shimmering whole cloth. Instead, we get a windy, chaotic tale, which owes more to Bob Guccione's "Caligula" than to classical scholarship (sample chapter headings: "Aesop at the Orgy," "The Binding of the Babe"). Jong can't resist turning Sappho into a sandal-shod Isadora Wing, careering from one rapt, cartoonish embrace to another while occasionally crooning verses that as an imitation of Sappho's ravishing, elusive poetry are hopelessly inadequate.

The Parthenon, *by Mary Beard (Harvard; $19.95).* This short, lively history by a Cambridge classicist examines not only the building's construction in the fifth century B.C. but also its subsequent life as Byzantine cathedral, Ottoman mosque, and iconic ruin and tourist destination. Beard steps adroitly through such controversial matters as the ownership of the Elgin Marbles, and is happiest when teasing out contradictions in the building's history: the Parthenon as it appears today is largely the result of the depredations of Victorian archeologists bent on stripping away anything that was not from Periclean Athens, and of extensive reconstruction in the nineteen-twenties—the combined results of which would be unrecognizable to any Athenian of classical times. She suggests that the Parthenon is ultimately as much an ideal of classicism as it is an actual building, and she relishes the story of the German scholar who went to Athens early in the twentieth century but couldn't bear to visit the Parthenon, in case it didn't live up to his expectations.

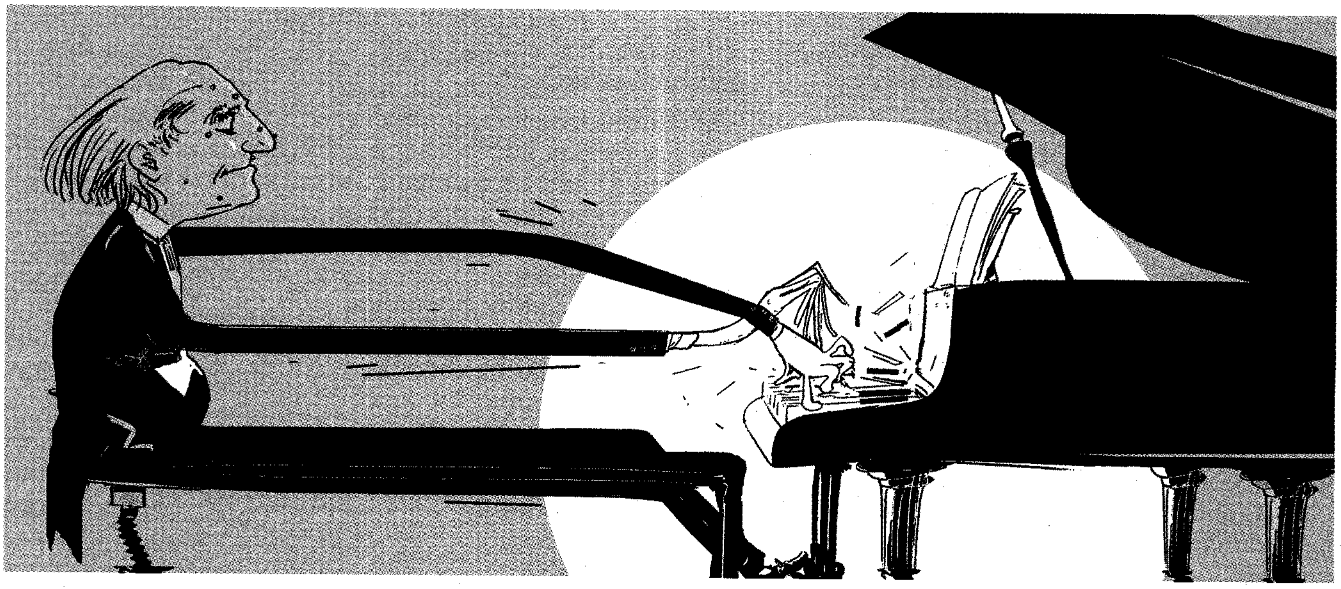
MUSICAL EVENTS

LAST THOUGHTS

A new work by Liszt.

BY ALEX ROSS

“The Death of Franz Liszt,” a new book by Alan Walker, belongs to the curious subgenre of books about the deaths of composers. In truth, I know of only two others, but each is a macabre little classic. One is Alexander Poznansky’s sober-minded “Tchaikovsky’s Last Days,” which shows that the composer of the “Pathétique” did not commit suicide at the behest of a homophobic cabal of law-school alumni, as some have claimed, but died horribly of cholera, as his doctors said he did. The other is Hans Moldenhauer’s melodramatic “The Death of Anton Webern,” which describes the accidental killing of the most esoteric of twelve-tone composers. It happened in 1945, during the American occupation of western Austria. Webern had stepped outside to enjoy a cigar and was on his way in when he collided with a jumpy G.I., who summarily shot him. The soldier later drank himself to death. The ultimate blame, Moldenhauer says, lies with “strange and inscrutable fate.”



In his final years, Liszt was composing a sacred work whose arcane dissonance left the nineteenth century behind.

ISTVAN BANYAI

Liszt’s death was neither mysterious nor violent. He died of a heart attack at the fairly ripe old age of seventy-four. What makes the story of his final illness gripping—inscrutably fateful, even—is that it unfolded against the gothic backdrop of Bayreuth, where his comrade, son-in-law, and sometime nemesis Richard Wagner had forged the “Ring.” Wagner died in Venice, in 1883, and was buried in the garden of his Bayreuth home. Liszt died three years later, in the house across the street. It was, Walker suggests, not the place where he would have preferred to breathe his last. Liszt’s friendship with Wagner had always been a loaded and lopsided one. “To Bayreuth I am not a composer but a publicity agent,” Liszt once complained. He watched as passages of his own scores magically reappeared in “Tristan” and “Parsifal.” He brooded over the aloofness of his daughter Cosima, who, after an internationally shocking adulterous interlude, became Wagner’s wife, protector, and alter ego. Still, he venerated Wagner, even at the risk of putting his own staggeringly original music in the shade.

Liszt in his declining years was attended round the clock by Lina Schmalhausen, a fanatical and probably infatuated pupil. Her meticulous record of Liszt’s last ten days constitutes the main part of Walker’s book. Cosima had asked her father to attend the Bayreuth Festival of 1886 on the ground that it needed his support. He arrived suffering from pneumonia, but Cosima’s doctor somehow missed the seriousness of his condition. He dragged himself to “Parsifal” and “Tristan,” suppressing a cough throughout. He repeatedly expressed annoyance that he was falling sick in Bayreuth, of all places—“right under the noses of those people,” he said. Cosima put in appearances at his bedside but was more concerned with overseeing the festival. Schmalhausen had been barred from the premises, but she managed to observe the Master on his deathbed while hiding behind bushes in the garden. Although Cosima insisted that her father’s dying word was “Tristan,” the last thing that Lina heard him say was “Please continue sleeping.”

I read the grotesque tale of Liszt’s death—which ends with a botched embalming and a dispute over ownership of the corpse—on the way to Cincinnati, where the city’s long-running May Festival was presenting the world première of Liszt’s final, unfinished composition: the oratorio “Saint Stanislaus.” The score was put together by the musicologist Paul Munson, who located in the Liszt archive in Weimar about an hour’s worth of more or less finished music, plus an aria that he orchestrated himself. He sent the score to James Conlon, a conductor with a sharp ear for overlooked works, who placed it on the program of the May Festival.

"Saint Stanislaus," which Liszt began composing in 1874, is a thrillingly strange piece that sways between the mundane and the arcane, as the composer's later music often does. What happened to this artist in old age is one of the enduring mysteries of musical history: the former showman of the European salons rocketed off into regions that no other nineteenth-century composer, not even Wagner, came near. The journey had much to do with Liszt's increasing immersion in the rites of the Roman Catholic Church, in which he had taken four of the seven holy orders by 1865 (including Exorcist). He determined to revive archaic modes of plainchant and Renaissance polyphony, and imposed upon them experiments in alternative scales and unconventional harmony. The result is a sound that is unsettling even to modern ears.

Liszt was able to finish the first and last scenes of a projected four-part epic. "De Profundis," in the fourth scene, exemplifies his late style. This section of the score was published shortly after the composer's death, but few people have ever heard it. The organ begins with a slow-motion melody that is defined by jagged intervals of the major seventh and the tritone. After two fearsome dissonant chords, the chorus chants "De profundis" on a single note, and a solo baritone (Donnie Ray Albert, making the most of a punishingly difficult part) takes up another meandering, quasi-atonal line. The entire sequence is static, repetitive, ritualistic. It sounds less like Schoenberg, whom Liszt is often said to have anticipated, than like Messiaen, whose harmony was also premised on the mixing of modes.

Just as shocking, in a different way, is the music that comes after—"Salve Polonia," a festive choral movement on Polish national themes. Given that Stanislaus is Poland's national hero, the patriotic ending makes sense, but the contrast is so severe as to be surreal. The May Festival chorus sang magnificently, with high passion and true intonation; the Cincinnati Symphony, under Conlon, provided a galvanic accompaniment. Still, they could not save the music from a certain pompous anonymity. There are many other striking passages in the "Stanislaus" score—beautifully austere Renaissance-style writing in the first scene, for example—but the over-all effect is bewildering. It is as if the composer were being torn by opposing forces in his personality—the desire to play to the masses and the urge to turn his back on them.

Liszt wrote some of "Saint Stanislaus" while staying with Wagner in Venice, in late 1882. Wagner had only a few months to live, but he was still in command of all his faculties, not to mention his cruelties. He told Cosima that her father's newest music, which he probably heard floating through the walls of the Palazzo Vendramin, was a symptom of "budding insanity." More perceptive was an earlier comment that Liszt's dissonances seemed to display a certain self-disgust, as if the composer were compensating for his youthful excesses. There is something to this. Many observers were suspicious of the suddenness with which the debonair superstar of the Romantic piano—the epicenter of the phenomenon that Heinrich Heine dubbed "Lisztomania"—made himself over as the black-clad Abbé Liszt.

But he was no charlatan. Even in his decadent, dandyish days, he had worked at his faith, and in old age he became that rare Christian who practices to the hilt the principle of loving one's neighbor as oneself. He was generous beyond the bounds of what seemed credible. Most of the century's major composers profited from his enthusiasm—even those who denounced him. He gave lessons to hundreds of pianists and never charged money. He sent large amounts to total strangers who importuned him in the mail. When staying in hotels, he often let his manservant have the more luxurious room. His spirituality, in other words, took the form of concrete action. Here was the root of his difference with Wagner, who was self-absorbed on a Pharaonic scale, and whose idea of religion came dangerously close to self-deification.

All the same, "Parsifal" succeeds in becoming the spiritually radiant work that "Saint Stanislaus" and other Liszt sacred pieces only aspire to be. It is at once popular and mystical, festive and arcane. It illuminates the highest hope that religion holds forth—the hope for a healed world. Liszt probably knew this, which is why he made his peace with the inscrutable fate of dying in Bayreuth. With a martyr's devotion, he even asked at one point to hear Wagner's prose writings read aloud. ♦

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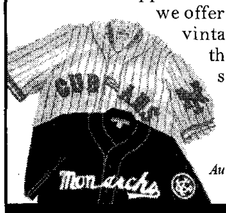

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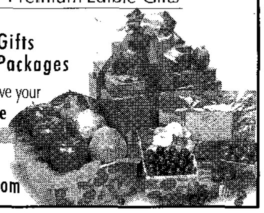

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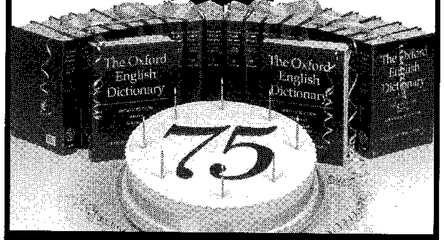

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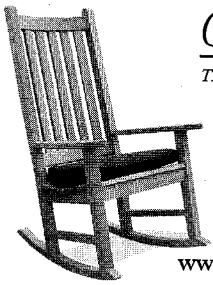

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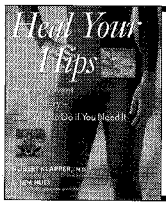

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THE THEATRE

THE SHADOW KNOWS

Athol Fugard and Doug Wright give voices to the invisible.

BY JOHN LAHR

The "boys" of Athol Fugard's " 'Master Harold' . . . and the Boys" (revived at the Royale, under the direction of Lonny Price) are two adult black South Africans, Willie (Michael Boatman) and Sam (Danny Glover), who work at the St. Georges Park Tea Room, in Port Elizabeth, and spend much of their time bantering affectionately with a seventeen-year-old whippersnapper, Hal (Christopher Denham)—or Hally, as they call him—who is the son of the tearoom's owners. A volatile amalgam of gladness and cultural gas, Hally, who arrives home from school wet and hungry, is clearly among family with Sam and Willie. Still, his school uniform and tie signal—as if white South Africans needed gaudier semaphores of privilege—the dimensions of his entitlement. Hally, though he is no academic highflier, has taught Sam to read, and he tries, as he patronizingly puts it, to give him "a decent education" by handing out various undigested tidbits of learning. Danny Glover's Sam is a stately combination of compassion and cunning. He boxes clever with his young charge, providing him with the masculine model that he conspicuously lacks. (Hal's father, we learn, is drunken, crippled, and abusive.) But, when Hally indulges in some callow bad-mouthing of his father, Sam advises him to watch his tone, and what begins as an avuncular admonition ends up a war.

Corrected by Sam, Hally, the stage directions tell us, "is rigid with shame." As the standoff unfolds, Fugard shows us how Hal, by asserting his superiority, forces that shame out of himself and into Sam. The puppyish teen-ager, who bobs around for most of the play like a dashboard dog, becomes suddenly stiff. He turns his back on his companions, and insists that Sam refer to him now as a servant would: "Master Harold." In a particularly cruel payback, Hally speaks of his father's "marvellous sense of humor" and repeats one of his jokes: " 'It's not fair, is it, Hally?' . . . 'What, Chum?' . . . 'A nigger's arse.' " Slowly, in a moment that makes the audience gasp, Sam walks in front of Hal, undoes his trousers, and bares his buttocks. "Have a good look," he says. "A real Basuto arse . . . which is about as nigger as they come. Satisfied?" Hally takes a beat, then spits in Sam's face. The scene is genuinely dangerous.

In the exchanges that follow, pain, fury, love, and hate ricochet between the two until Sam finally allows Hally to leave with his face saved but his innocence lost. This dark collision begins and ends with a daydream of harmony and dance. At curtain rise, Willie is practicing alone for a ballroom-dancing competition; at the finale, as the jukebox plays Sarah Vaughan, he and Sam dance together. The scene works poignantly as a symbol of black unity and hope. Earlier in the evening, Sam describes ballroom dancing to Hally as a kind of metaphor for world politics: in the ideal version, he says, "there's no collisions out there, Hally. Nobody trips or stumbles or bumps into anybody." But in the dance of life America bumps into Russia, England into India, the rich man into the poor. "Are we never going to get it right?" Sam asks. "Learn to dance life like champions instead of always being just a bunch of beginners at it?" Fugard's play, it seems, holds the sweet dream of justice and the hell of racial hatred in perfect equipoise.

Fugard explores the anatomy of shame; "I Am My Own Wife" (at Playwrights Horizons) shows us a maverick liberated from it. The play is—as its title broadcasts—the story of a narcissist. Nothing, however, can quite prepare you for its hero, Lothar Berfelde, a transvestite and collector who, living for decades in East Berlin as "Charlotte von Mahlsdorf," survived first the Nazis, then the Stasi. In the first scene of the play, Charlotte appears before us in her family house, which she has turned into a museum for her collection of records, gramophones, petroleum lamps, clocks, and other bric-a-brac of the Gay Nineties. She wears a black kerchief, a plain black dress, and sensible black shoes, her only accessory an elegant strand of pearls. There is no makeup, no feminine exaggeration, no camp, no sense of defiance or despair in her presentation of self. At first glance, she could almost be a nun. As Jefferson Mays brilliantly embodies her, Charlotte is a meticulous, modest soul. What is sensational about her is her normality.

"I Am My Own Wife" is a semi-factual account of an eccentric who seems herself to have been a work of semi-fiction. The playwright Doug Wright's attempt to understand Charlotte's life—he subtitles his script "studies for a play"—makes no claims for its subject; yet beneath Wright's witty fondness for his character there is a palpable awe at her demure daring. He shows us, in the basement of Charlotte's museum, a tavern for gays and lesbians that she kept alive for nearly thirty years "under the watchful eyes of the Stasi." "We were not supposed to exist," Charlotte says. "So I thought to give homosexual women and men community. . . . So we met here—in *die Mulack-Ritze*—on the Sunday afternoons." As Charlotte describes the attic, where couples could go to indulge their particular appetites—even "whips and things to beat on the behind"—there is no lip-smacking; rather, the dramatic power of her account lies in its matter-of-factness. This quiet collector, Wright seems to imply, may well have been one of the century's great sexual outlaws.

The one-man show is a notoriously intractable species of entertainment, but Wright, who had a hit in 1995 with "Quills," a study of the Marquis de Sade, marshals his words with command. Aided by strong direction from Moisés Kaufman, who makes the transitions both clear and compelling, Wright has conceived the evening as a sort of detective story to uncover the facts of Charlotte's life. Wright, who interviewed von Mahlsdorf several times before she died, last year, dramatizes those interviews, and the contrast of tones and attitudes—Mays plays a handful of other characters, too, including the playwright, and his German voices are as credible as his American ones—conjures up resonant ironic worlds and subtle psychological reverberations.

Boatman, Glover, and Denham in "Master Harold." Photograph by Dudley Reed.

At the center of Charlotte's emotional history is a lesbian aunt who ran a horse farm in Prussia, where the teen-aged Lothar first tried on dresses. The aunt also gave young Lothar a book on transvestism, which asserted that it was an "utterly natural . . . phenomenon." This may explain why Charlotte seems easy in her flesh, but it doesn't explain the origins of her obsession. Wright understands that within the mystery of the facts is also the mystery of a personality. As a collector, Charlotte has a particularly porous fanaticism; she seems to merge with her objects until they are part of her and she is part of them. Wright conveys this powerfully in the play's best speech. "When families died, I became this furniture," Charlotte says. "When the Jews were deported in the Second World War, I became it. When citizens were burned out of their homes by the Communists, I became it." She goes on, "After the coming of the Wall, when the old mansion houses were destroyed to create the people's architecture, I became it." Charlotte, in other words, is in the preservation business. She is not the living dead but the dead living. Even the dress she wears is a way of keeping her beloved aunt with her. "My aunt was a lesbian, and I was the same," she says at one point.

When the Stasi files were declassified, von Mahlsdorf was revealed to have been an informer. The news made headlines, and many aspects of her story—her murder of her brutal Nazi father when she was fifteen, her subsequent incarceration and escape from jail, her association with a homosexual antique dealer, whom she betrayed—were called into question. Charlotte responded to Wright's inquiries with equanimity, but she left him, as he leaves us, with doubts. "I need to believe her stories as much as she does!" Wright says. "That Lothar Berfelde navigated a path between the two most repressive regimes the Western world has ever known—the Nazis and the Communists—in a pair of heels. I need to believe that things like that . . . can happen in the world." Whatever the historical truth, Wright's play offers, at least, a theatrical truth: the enduring thrill of the human encounter. ♦

THE CURRENT CINEMA

FISHY BUSINESS

"Finding Nemo."

BY ANTHONY LANE

There is much to be said for any movie in which Allison Janney plays a starfish. Fans of "The West Wing" are so used to seeing her in the guise of a tall White House press secretary that they may need time to adjust to her as a pink sticky thing the size of an Oreo. Such, however, is Janney's contribution to "Finding Nemo," the latest animated production from Pixar, which also offers Geoffrey Rush in the role of a pelican and Willem Dafoe as a scarred, ocean-hardened bruiser of a fish named Gill. This may be the toughest thing that Dafoe has done since "Platoon."

The business of matching voice-over to animated character has in recent years become an exact science, far removed from the days when Snow White was allowed to sound like a doll with a pull-string in her spine. Make that film again now and you'd have J. Lo fighting for top billing, with Ice Cube providing the definitive Grumpy. The credits for animated films used to read, "With the voice talents of . . . ," or some such coy locution; this summer, as Disney builds up to its latest release, you can open a newspaper and see the simple words "Brad Pitt *is* Sinbad." Nice work for Pitt, whose epic wanderings must have sent him voyaging all the way to a recording studio and a comfy pair of headphones.

"Finding Nemo" comes from the same stable that devised "A Bug's Life," "Monsters, Inc.," and, best of all, the two "Toy Story" pictures, which have eased their way into the acrylically bright consciousness of modern children and secured a place that was occupied, once upon a time, by the more deeply shadowed, soft-washed hues of "Pinocchio." If Walt Disney and his draftsmen—the faithful dwarves who toiled in his mines—conjured images that spoke of pencil and watercolor, then Pixar—which collaborates with Disney—makes art for the age of the iMac. The twist in "Finding Nemo" is that Andrew Stanton directs it as if intent on bridging old and new. We are no longer in the shining Monstropolis of "Monsters, Inc.," where even a single sock, with its taint of human cheesiness, had to be tracked and destroyed. This time, in a floating half-light, we are under the sea.

Nemo, a young clown fish (voiced by nine-year-old Alexander Gould), manages to lose first his mother, who functions as a light breakfast for a passing barracuda, and then his father, Marlin (Albert Brooks), who is left behind when Nemo is netted by a diver and taken away in the back of a boat. The rest of the plot flows back and forth between the lost and the seeker; Nemo ends up in a decorative tank in a dentist's office in Sydney, Australia, while the timid Marlin sets off, via a selection of natural obstacles, to rescue his only child.

It is from the obstacles—depleted versions of the tasks that faced the heroes of classical legend—that the story derives its energy, and it is here, also, that Pixar's digital technology is unleashed. You want rays and anemones? You want a sneezing baby sea horse ("I'm H_2O-intolerant")? You want a forest of jellyfish, each rosy frond spitting an electrical hiss? No problem. The boffins in the back office apparently solved the issue of see-through creatures with a computer shading system called "transblurrency," a term usually applied to actresses who are in the process of thanking the Academy for their awards. There is a particularly fine anglerfish, who operates at great depth by swinging a luminous bulb in front of its prey like a hypnotist dangling a watch, although it is true that most hypnotists, being members of a well-regulated body of professionals, tend not to swallow the patient whole.

There are two drawbacks to this stuff. First, there is the old pull of the anthropomorphic, without which the genre would not exist. Until recently, all that one could hope for, tremulously, was the good taste of the filmmaker, trusting that he or she would distinguish between the smart and the cute. For every Shere Khan in "The Jungle Book" (a matchless introduction to malign ennui, and one of George Sanders's finest hours), there was the dire prospect of listening to Thumper in "Bambi," whose tapping hind paw made me think longingly of Lapin de Garenne au Saupiquet. ("You must collect the blood of the rabbit in a jug," my cookbook says. Any time.) That distinction no longer holds. "Finding Nemo" is, as it happens, the most dangerously sugared of the Pixar productions to date—how could any father-finding-son saga be otherwise?—but the threat is now one of oversophistication. Take the sharks: three of them, all trying to swear off fish, like addicts in recovery. The gag is designed to flit over the heads of younger kids and keep their parents happy, regardless of whether it has any logical place in the movie.

Second, this comic vanity extends to the look of the entire picture. Until now, Pixar has struck me as something close to a miracle; the "Toy Story" films were so neat in their narrative drive, and they took such intricate pains to obey their central conceit, that one wound up feeling sorry for the sagging live-action comedies, romantic and lavatorial alike, that are shovelled out by other studios. To find the equivalent of Woody and Buzz—the lovely patty-cake of their opposing vanities—you had to glance back to Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, or even to the petty squabbling of the "Road" movies. (Many happy returns to Bob Hope, but Buzz will make it to a hundred and fifty without a scratch.) Pixar, with its first shot, had hit the bull's-eye; rather than denying the shine and plasticity of computer-generated images, why not go with the flow—set your movie in a plastic world, whose presiding force is not the Almighty but Mattel?

Since then, however, the films have been tempted toward naturalism, and

A NORWEGIAN WEDDING

Because the Leprosy Museum is still closed
We find ourselves in St. Olaf's, eavesdropping
On a Norwegian wedding. The Lutheran light
Picks us out from among the small congregation.
How few friends anyone has. I'm glad we came.
Christ holds his hands up high above the lovers
And fits his death into the narrow window. Oh,
His sore hands. How many friends does a leper have?
Bride and bridegroom walk past us and into the rain.
It is mid-May. All of the roads out of Bergen
Are bordered with lady's-smock and wood anemones.

—*Michael Longley*

that is where they falter. On the one hand, all Pixar humans are duds, drastically stranded between portrait and cartoon, from Andy, in "Toy Story," to Boo, the little girl in "Monsters, Inc.," and now the dentist in "Finding Nemo." On the other hand, you can feel Stanton's picture admiring its own reflection, as the programmers summon perfect waves, or the effect of sunlight under the surface of the water, or the tongue of a whale, viewed from inside its mouth. (Echoes of "Pinocchio.") With "Toy Story," the Pixar enthusiasts developed the ideal medium in which to tell their story. This time, they have pasted together a thin, sentimental tale that just happens to be the ideal vehicle for the demonstration of an improving medium. To authenticity, and beyond!

Still, this is Pixar, which means that many scenes glimmer with precisely calibrated fun. I was especially taken by the thought that what seagulls are actually saying, in their ceaseless racket of cries, is "Mine! Mine! Mine!," their mini-brains focussed on nothing but food. And I suppose the giant turtles that give Marlin a ride toward Sydney are pleasing enough, although the fact that they converse in the drawl of surfer dudes is only quite funny, and certainly becomes less so as the scenes drag on. The biggest surprise about "Finding Nemo" is that what really comes to the rescue is not a turtle or a pelican but, moving further up the food chain, Ellen DeGeneres. She is the voice of Dory, a dumb fish who hooks up with Marlin—not unlike Ratso Rizzo, in "Midnight Cowboy," with extra scales—and guides him toward his destination. The joke is that Dory ("I'm a natural blue") has a short memory, and that suits DeGeneres just fine; her gulping, darting speech patterns are the exact equivalent of the way in which her character swims, which is more than you could say for Esther Williams.

DeGeneres alone seems happy in the watery spaces of this picture; some of the other characters are all at sea, and if you can recite the names and appearances of Nemo's friends in the fishtank (poor relations of Andy's belongings in "Toy Story") you're doing better than I am. I don't want to assign blame here, but was it wise to expend such labor on a film about fish? Here's the main problem with fish: they look like *fish*. Didn't Pixar learn its lesson from "A Bug's Life," whose mild dullness could be traced to the fact that most of it was set in an anthill? Insects and fish: the bony extras of the animal kingdom, inexplicably promoted to leading roles. If Pixar ever got hold of Adam Sandler, I hate to think what would happen. ♦

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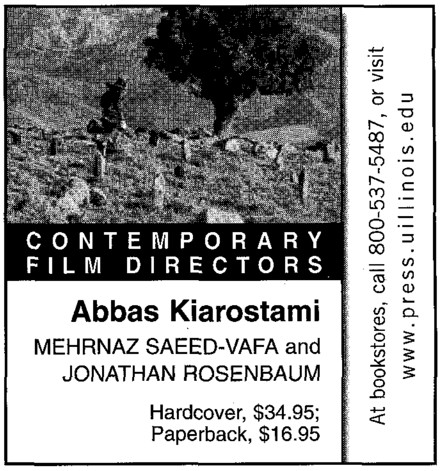

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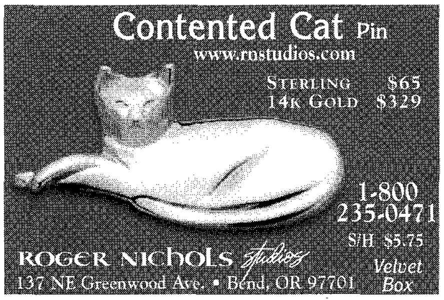

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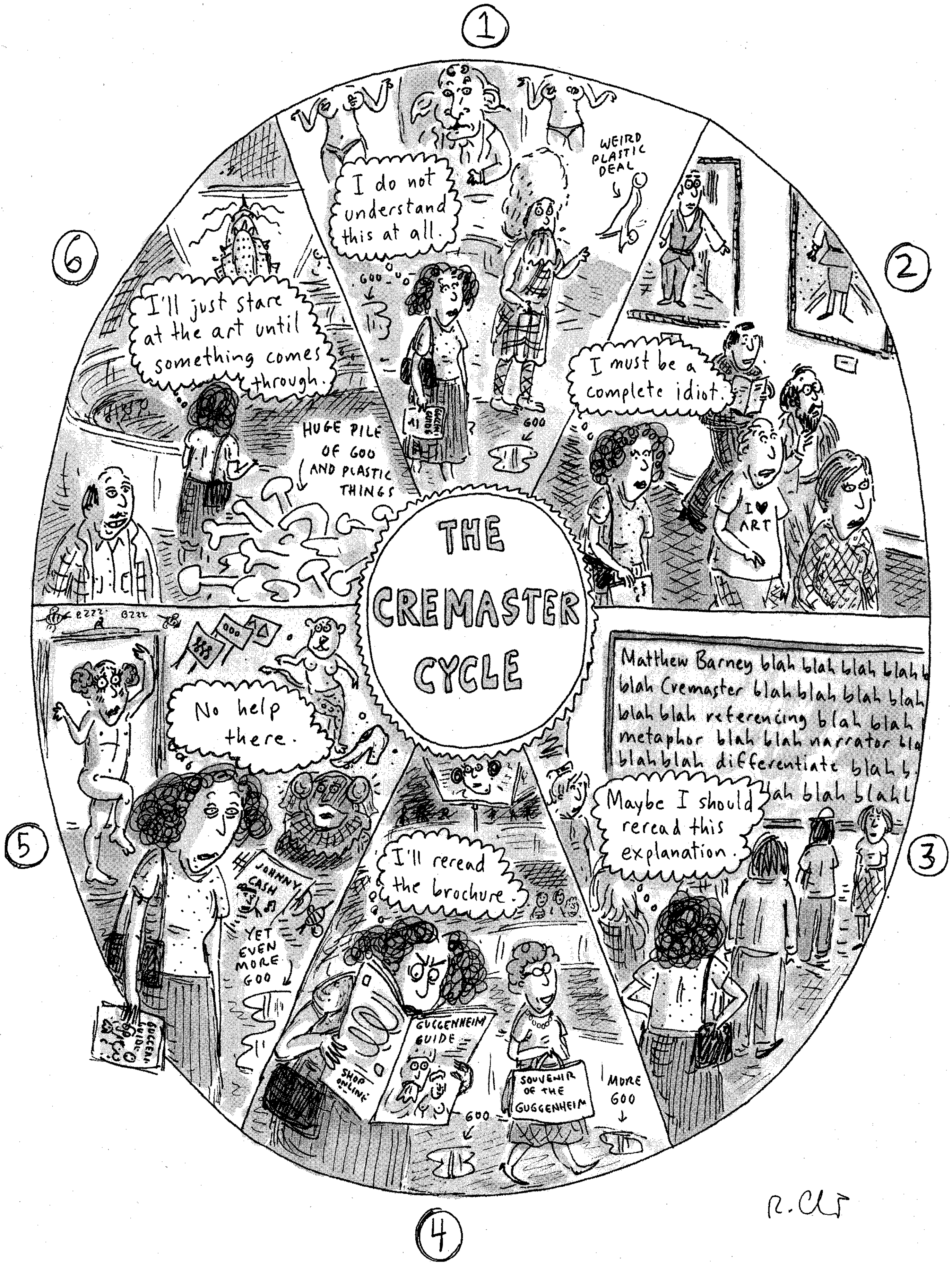
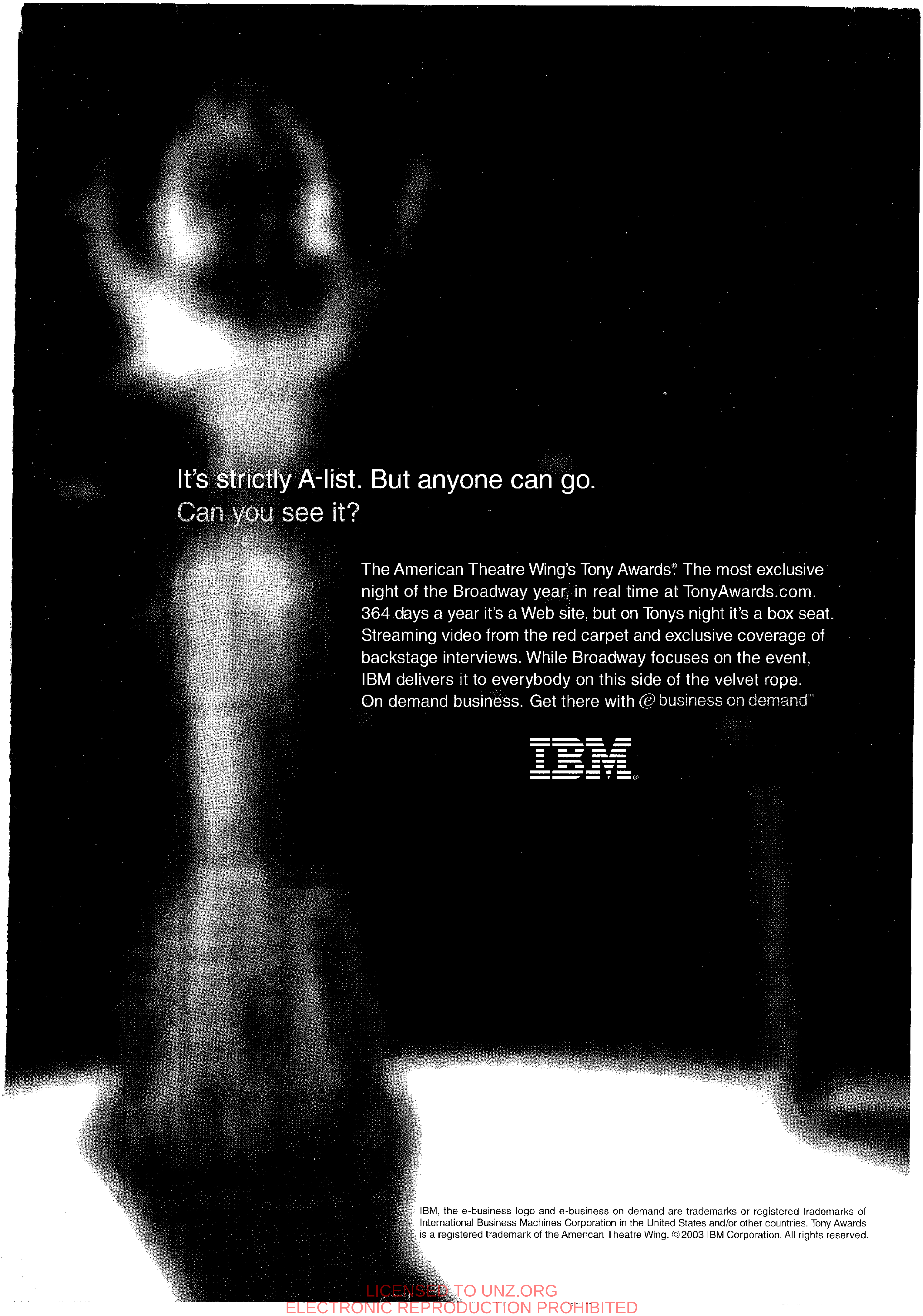

THE CREMASTER CYCLE
1
I do not understand this at all.
WEIRD PLASTIC DEAL
GOO
GOO
GUGGENHEIM GUIDE
2
I must be a complete idiot.
I ♥ ART
3
Matthew Barney blah blah blah blah b
blah Cremaster blah blah blah blah
blah blah referencing blah blah
metaphor blah blah narrator bla
blah blah differentiate blah b
blah blah blah
Maybe I should reread this explanation.
4
I'll reread the brochure.
GUGGENHEIM GUIDE
SHOP ONLINE
SOUVENIR OF THE GUGGENHEIM
GOO
MORE GOO
5
ZZZZ BZZZ
No help there.
JOHNNY CASH
YET EVEN MORE GOO
GUGGEN. GUIDE
6
I'll just stare at the art until something comes through.
HUGE PILE OF GOO AND PLASTIC THINGS



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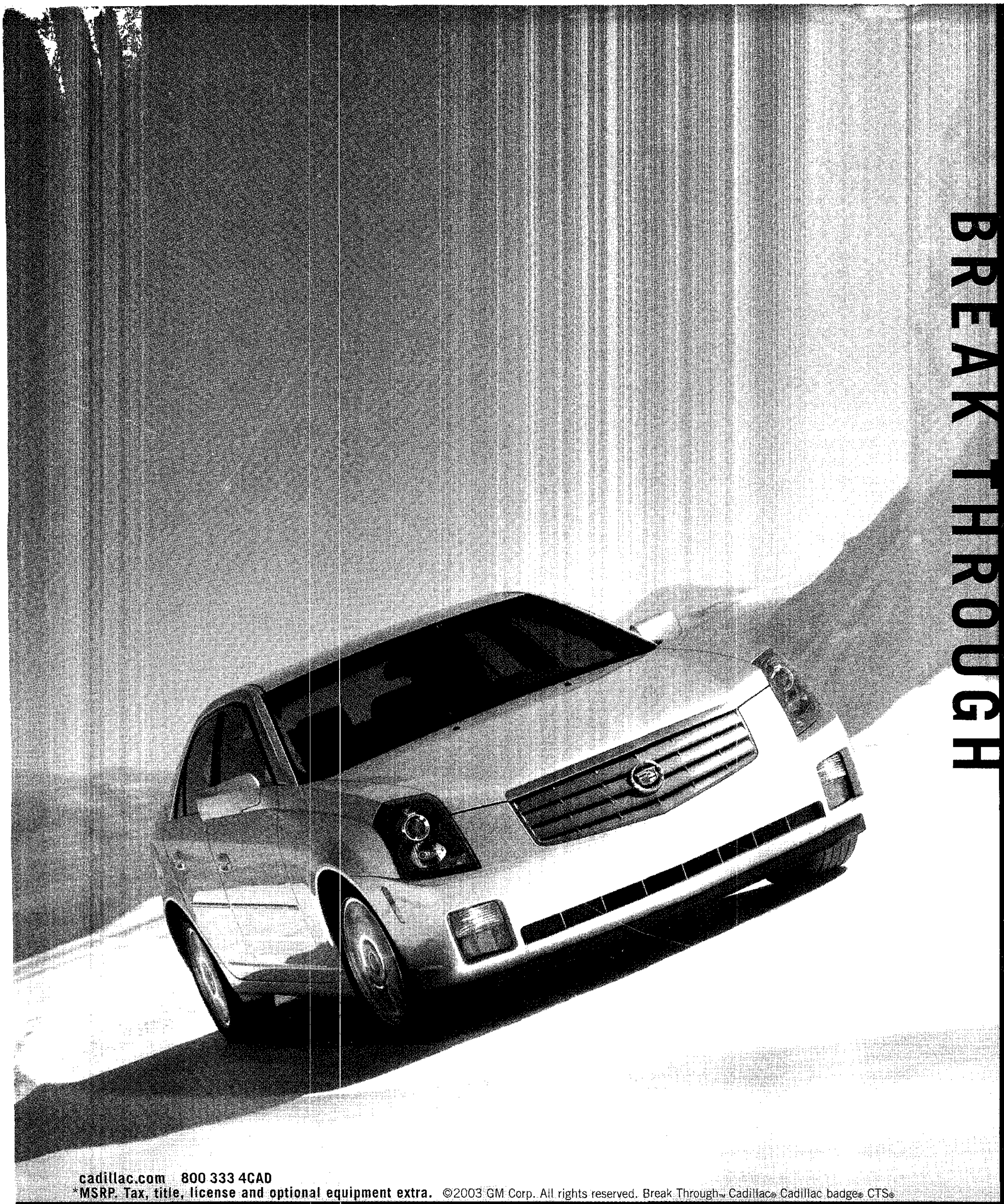

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